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Introduction

This book is a description of some of my ancestors, from the earliest known, Robert, who emigrated from England to America in 1633. The story moves in a circle, with the family arriving back in England in 1870.

I have called them a pioneering family. A pioneer is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as *a person who is amongst the first to explore or settle a new country*. Another meaning is *an original worker in a particular field or department of knowledge*.

There are quotes throughout the book. The sources are mostly on the internet. See the bibliography for details.

Robert the Bailiff

of Dorchester, Massachusetts, ?-?1640

In 1633, Robert Dible sailed from Weymouth in England to settle in Dorchester in the new Massachusetts Bay Colony.



This is very early. In 1620, the Pilgrim Fathers sailed to Plymouth, New England, so Robert's journey was just 13 years later.

This should be put in context. Christopher Columbus landed in America in 1492, well over a hundred years earlier. Various European countries were interested in the Americas. Brazil was claimed by Portugal, and Spain took the rest of South America. The French were interested in Canada. The Dutch were exploring the area which became New York.

So these early settlers were not alone. And of course we must not forget the people who were there already. I will call these people, Indians, because this was what the early settlers called them. We will meet the Indians later. But not yet.

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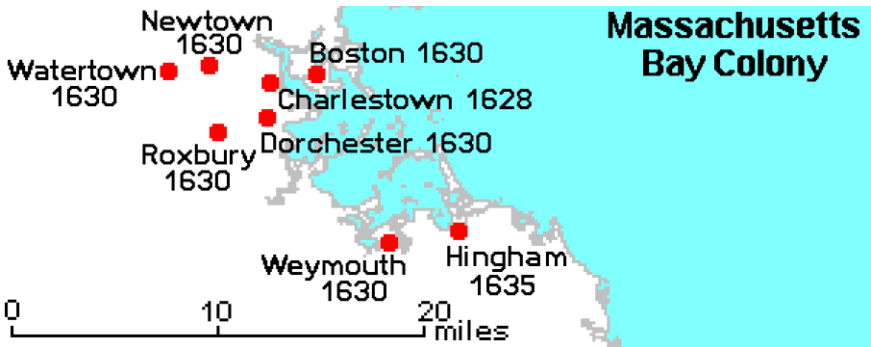
So what was the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and why did these settlers come to America?

An important reason was religion. At this time Charles I was king of Britain. Britain was a Protestant country, but there are different forms of Protestantism. The official religion was Anglicism (later called Episcopalian), with bishops in authority. Puritans had a more fervent belief in personal religious conviction. These religious practices were being suppressed by King Charles and his archbishop.

By the 1620's, many Puritans felt that there was no longer a future for them in England, and were looking for somewhere else to live. The new Plymouth colony in New England showed the way. The Massachusetts Bay Company was set up in England in 1629. Despite the company disliking King Charles, he granted them a charter. This was necessary to give a legal basis for the new English colony at Massachusetts. It is suspected that King Charles did not realise what the company intended to do, and thought it was just a trading company.

However, the purpose of the company was to create new settlements, and it was soon decided that some of the company's directors would leave for America themselves, instead of running the colony from England. This was to be a truly American colony.

There were already some settlements in the area, apart from Plymouth (which was further south). The main settlement started when John Winthrop arrived in 1630 with a fleet of ships. He became Governor of the new colony. He kept a diary (see bibliography).



Winthrop made a new town, Boston, which became his base, and the other ships of his fleet found places nearby. These became the new towns of the colony. One of these was Dorchester, where Robert settled. Dorchester has now been swallowed up by the modern Boston, but it still exists as a neighbourhood there, and is proud of its heritage.

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Times were hard in the new colony. One of the first settlers in Dorchester in 1630 was Roger Clap, who wrote an account of his early life (see bibliography).

Roger Clap describes what the first winter was like.

Now coming into this country, I found it a vacant wilderness, in respect of English. There were indeed some English at Plymouth and Salem, and some few at Charlestown, who were very destitute when we came ashore; and planting-time being past, shortly after provision was not to be had for money, I wrote to my friends, namely, to my dear father, to send me some provision, which accordingly he did ; and also gave order to one of his neighbours to supply me with what I needed (he being a seaman) who coming hither supplied me with divers things. But before this supply came, yea and after too (that being spent) and the then unsubdued wilderness yielding little food, many a time, if I could have filled my belly, though with mean victuals, it would have been sweet unto me. Fish was a good help unto me, and others. Bread was so very scarce, that sometimes I thought the very crusts of my father's table would have been very sweet

unto me. And when I could have meal and water and salt boiled together, it was so good, who could wish better? ...

In our beginning many were in great straits, for want of provision for themselves and their little ones. Oh the hunger that many suffered, and saw no hope in an eye of reason to be supplied, only by clams, and muscles, and fish. We did quickly build boats, and some went a fishing. But bread was with many a very scarce thing ; and flesh of all kinds as scarce. And in those days, in our straits, though I cannot say God sent a raven to feed us, as he did the prophet Elijah ; yet this I can say to the praise of God's glory, that he sent not only poor ravenous Indians, which came with their baskets of corn on their backs, to trade with us, which was a good supply unto many; but also sent ships from Holland and from Ireland with provisions, and Indian Corn from Virginia, to supply the wants of his dear servants in this wilderness, both for food and raiment. And when peoples wants were great, not only in one town but in divers towns; such was the godly wisdom, care and prudence (not selfishness, but self-denial) of our Governor Winthrop and his assistants, that when a ship came laden with provisions, they did order that the whole cargo should be bought for a general stock: And so accordingly it was, and distribution was made to every town, and to every person in each town, as every man had need. ...

In those days God did cause his people to trust in him, and to be contented with mean things. It was not accounted a strange thing in those days to drink water, and to eat samp or homine without butter or milk. Indeed it would have been a strange thing to see a piece of roast beef, mutton or veal; though it was not long before there was roast goat. After the first winter, we were very healthy; though some of us had no great store of corn.

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Once the colony had established itself, more ships began to arrive from England. The name Robert Dible is on the passenger list of one of those ships, the Recovery. It left Weymouth, in Dorset, 31 March 1633. Winthrop's diary of 24 Jun 1633 says:

*A ship arrived from Weymouth, with about eighty passengers, and twelve kine, who set down at Dorchester. They were twelve weeks coming, being forced into the Western Islands by a leak, where they stayed three weeks, and were very courteously used by the Portugals; but the extremity of the heat there, and the continual rain brought sickness upon them.*

This is likely to be the Recovery, as the date and locations match.

The early town records of Dorchester still exist (see bibliography).

The town records describe land grants, but the early years do not give much detail. The first reference to Robert is two years after he arrived, in 1635. He had been joined by his son, Thomas, who had just sailed out from England. Dorchester town records say:

*The 17th day of December 1635. It is ordered that Robert Deeble shall have inlardgment of Two goad in length from his house upward, and that his sonne T[hommas] Deeble shall have six goad next him, to goe with a right lyne up from the pale before his house on condition for Thommas Deeble to build a house there within one yeere or else to loose that goad graunted him.*

A "goad" is a rood, which is 1210 square yards or a quarter of an acre. Robert obviously already has some land at this time, as he is granted an "inlardgment". The "pale" is a fence. Thomas has just arrived, so he has been given a new grant of land, as long as he builds a house on it.

You may notice that the surname seems to have various spellings. This was common at the time. It was not until the 1700's that the family name

settled as Dibblee. The modern name is pronounced "Di/blee" with the emphasis on the second syllable. Of course we do not know how it used to be pronounced, although the different spellings may give a clue. Dibblee was my own name until I married, and I found that no-one could spell it (or pronounce it) right. Perhaps this has always happened. Robert signed himself Deeble.

The town records give another grant of land:

*4th of January [1636] Robert Deeble and his sonne.. 30 acres*

After this, there is no further reference to Thomas, the son of Robert, in Dorchester town records. We will see why in the next chapter. For now, we will follow the career of Robert.

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I have said that religion was one reason for the new colony. Another was the right to manage their own affairs. Winthrop, the Governor of the entire colony, said that the new community would be a "city upon a hill", watched by the world. His own diary showed how important democracy was:

1632 May 8 A general court at Boston. Whereas it was (at our first coming) agreed, that the freemen should choose the assistants, and they the governor, the whole court agreed now, that the governor and assistants should all be new chosen every year by the general court, (the governor to be always chosen out of the assistants;) and accordingly the old governor, John Winthrop, was chosen.

This shows that the colony elected their own governor, rather than the company appointing him. Sometimes things got out of hand. In one debate:

There was great danger of a tumult that day; for those of that side grew into fierce speeches, and some laid hands on others; but seeing themselves too weak, they grew quiet.

The freemen were the electorate. They were men only, of course. Robert Dibell was made freeman of Massachusetts Bay on 6 May 1635 (yet another version of his name).

The general court at Boston made rules for the whole colony. But each town also ran its own affairs. There was a town meeting once a year, where the town freemen voted on matters. They also elected the select men who ran the town the rest of the time. There were minor town posts, and one of these was the bailiff. From the Dorchester town records:

March 18 [1638] Robert Deeble is chosen Baylif for half a yeere or till another be chosen and it is ordered that he shall levy all fines rates and ameracements for the Plantation by impounding the offenders Goods, and then to deteyne them till satisfaction be made and if the owners of the goods shall not make satisfaction within 9 dayes it shall be lawfull for him to sell the goods and to returne the overplus to the party offending and to be alowed 12d for every distresse and 2d for every impounding of Cow horse or hogg and for every goate a penny and if said Baylif shall be negligent in discharging his office and delay the takeing distresse he shall be loyable to a fyne as shall be thought fit by the 20 men. It shall be lawfull for the said Baylif to recover any rates or ameracements by way of distresse on any goods.

Robert Deeble was chosen for the following year, and the one after as well, so he seems to have done the job to everyone's satisfaction. There is a payment to Robert Deeble, unfortunately undated, but presumably for one of these years, for £1. The sums of money are 'old' British money. There were 12 pence (or 12d) to a shilling, and 20 shillings (20s) to a pound (£1).

The town records describes the causes of some of the 'fynes' which could be levied.

July 5th 1635. Whereas there is a former order for all swine that shall trespasse in any of the Corne fields, the pale where the swine come in to pay one halfe and the swine the other: It is now further ordered that such swine as trespass shall be impounded and there to be kept till the owner shall pay the trespasse, as shall be Judged by Two of the members: and if the owner in 3 dayes after notice take not of the swine and satisfie the trespasse then it may be lawful for the Baylife to sell the swine as he can and pay the trespasse and return the overpluss to the owner. And further it is ordered that the same Course shall be taken for the levying of any trespasse that shall be committed by goates or other cattle.

In other words, if a pig (or goat or cow) broke through a fence (pale) into a corn field, then half the damage must be paid by the owner of the animal, and half by the owner of the fence.

This seems harsh to us, since we assume that the owner of an animal must fence it in. But they had common grazing land, and the fences were necessary to stop the animals wandering where they were not allowed. The corn was important to the colony, and it was the grower's responsibility to keep his fences in repair.

It is ordered that if any breake Oop the pound or take out cattell violently shall forfeit 5 pound sterling to be employed for generall works in the Plantation, and if it cannot be proved who brake the pound then the party that is the owner of the Cattell shall fill the pound agayne, or elce he shall be taken to be the trespasser.

It is obvious who owns a fence, but not necessarily who owns the badly behaved animal. So the bailiff could grab the animal, and not release it until its owner paid up.

It seems that some owner objected to this, and broke open the pound to retrieve his animal without paying his fine. This rule sets a serious fine of £5 for such behaviour. If no-one saw who it was, then it was assumed to be the owner of the animal. Presumably by this time, the bailiff had worked out who the owner was, or recognised it when he saw it again.

Since the town was so new, they were working out what their town rules should be. So the rules for these mischievous animals were changed from time to time.

January 16, 1636. It is farther ordered that what Tresspasses shall hereafter be done the Tressepasser shall pay the one halfe of the dammadge, and he that is defective in his pale the other halfe; and this order to be generall thorough the whole Plantation. Provided that if any cattle be knowen to be common pale breakers; they shall pay the whole Trespasse.

The fine is still 50/50, except for "common pale breakers" who had to pay the lot. The fence owners presumably were objecting that no fence could keep some cows out!

The goats seem to be causing problems.

23 Aprill. 1638. It is ordered that noe goates shall goe on the Commons or highwayes neere Corne fields without a keep but to be impounded and pay doble dammage.

And the pigs...

February 13th. [1639] It is ordered that no inhabitant of Dorchester shall keepe any swyne but within his own propertye or under a herdsman 2 miles from any corne field under penalty of Two shill[ings]:

Those pigs still aren't behaving themselves.

1 of [March] 1641. It is ordered that all the inhabitants of Dorchester shall sufficiently Ringe and yoke all their Hogges and other swine and that it shall be Lawffull for Bayliffe of the towne or any freeman of the Towne whosoever to take and to impound any such Hogges or other swine as he or they shall Find upon the Comons of Dorchester unringed or unyoked from tyme to tyme and the owners to Paye for every Hogge or other swine so impounded 8 s[hillings] beside the pounce chardge the one halffe to the impounder and the other to the use of the towne.

Some of the pigs seem to be fed on clams.

If there be any Livinge neare unto any Clam bankes where they would have their hogges to Clam they shall Comitt them unto the handes of a keep[er] to drive them to the banke and there attend them and to bringe them back unto their Coates or pounds where they keepe such swine and if any such swine be Found not under the hands of a keep and unringed and unyoked shalbe Lyable unto the penalty expessed in the pemisses, the order of yoakinge to continue until Indian Harvest and ringinge, in regard of the sad experience we have of the hurt is Done in and about the Towne and Like to be it is to continue all the yeare.

Now it is the cows' turn.

The 4th of [April] 1642. Wheare as there are Divers cattle that are Unrulley not apt to bee pounded neither Can bee driven by on[e] man. It is therfor Ordered that any such Cattle Trancegresseinge Aganst any towne order that The Owneres thereof shall pay the Balife his dutyes Although the Cattle are not Impounded (provided that the Balife goes and acquantes the Owners at the time that they Trancegreses) but if the Owneres of the Cattle shall Refuse to pay the baylife: Then it shall be lawfull for him to take one man or more as occation may requier to helpe him to drive thoes cattle to the pound and the Owners shall pay the fine

and all the Charge of thoes men helpeinge of him and this to be leveyed by destrese.

Between "common pale breakers", unkept goats, unyoked pigs and unruly cows, the bailiff seems to have been kept busy.

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These early settlers naturally took their religion very seriously indeed. In 1636, Richard Mather, the new minister at Dorchester called for a new covenant to be signed by the whole congregation. Here is part of this covenant.

*Wee whose names are subscribed being called of God to joyne o'selves together in Church Comunion ... doe in the name of Christ Jesus or Lord ... freely Covent and bind ourselves solemnely in the presence of God himselfe, his holy Angells and all his servants here present that*

*We will by his grace assisting us endeavour constantly to walke togeather as a right ordered Congregacon of Christ. according to all the holy rules of a church-body rightly established ...*

*And lastly we do hereby Covent and promise to further to our utmost power, the best spirituall good of each other, and of all and every one that may become members of this Congregacon, by mutuall Instruction reprehension, exhortacon, consolacon, and spirituall watchfulnes over one another for good; and to bee subject in and for the Lord to all the Administracons and Censures of the Congregacon, so farre as the same shall bee guided according to the rules of Gods most holy word.*

I must admit that this sounds rather like a snooper's charter!

This is signed by the congregation, including Robert Deeble. Other people sign later, including, in 1642, Goody Deeble. This will be Robert's wife.

The men and women usually signed together, so I do not know why Robert's wife signed years later. It is possible that they had only just got married in 1642. Robert must have been married in England, as he had children, but there is no evidence whether or not his wife came out with him, if indeed she was still alive. The passenger list of the Recovery, Robert's ship, gives men only, presumably the heads of households.

I know nothing else about Goody Deeble, including her name ('Goody' means 'goodwife'). A quote from the 19th century Joseph Hodges Choate: "A witty woman of Boston said that she had a world of sympathy for the Pilgrim mothers, because they not only endured all that the Pilgrim fathers had done, but they also had to endure the Pilgrim fathers to boot." Genealogy always finds it easier to follow the men than the women, as the men kept their surnames on marriage, and were more likely to get into the historic records. Such was life, alas.

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The rest of the references to Robert Deeble in Dorchester town records concern land ownership, mostly land grants. It seems that Robert must have had about forty acres of land, perhaps more, as we do not know his initial land grant. Also he would have shared in the common grazing rights. The last reference connected with land ownership is the most interesting. It is concerned with the funding for the new free school in Dorchester.

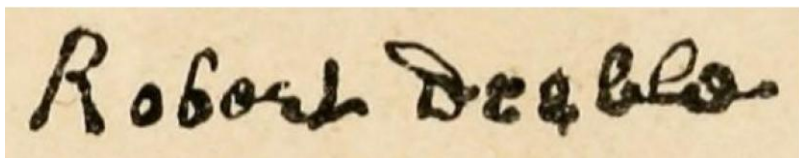
Education was extremely important to the colony. Their religious duties included reading the Bible, and their ministers were expected to be learned men. In 1636, Harvard University was founded in Newtown (later renamed Cambridge). Perhaps Dorchester felt obliged to keep up. In 1639, the Dorchester town records say:

There shall be a rent of £20 yearly imposed upon Tomsons Island towards the maintenance of a school in Dorchester, this rent to be paid to such a

schoolmaster to teach English, Latin and other tongues, and also writing. The schoolmaster to be chosen from time to time by the freemen. That is left to the discretion of elders and the 7 men for the time being, whether maids shall be taught with the boys or not.

I do not think that this intriguing idea of co-education school ever came about.

By 1642, nothing seems to have happened. There were problems collecting the necessary rent, as there were 120 land owners on Thompson Island. Robert Deeble was bailiff during part of this period, and I wonder he was involved in the attempted rent collection. It was also realised that £20 a year was insufficient to fund a school. So the town drew up a deed bequeathing the whole of Thompson Island to fund this new free school. This, naturally, had to be signed who was giving away some of their land. These signatures have survived, and they include Robert Deeble's.



This shows that he was literate. Several of the signatures were just marks, witnessed by others.

There were still problems. In 1651, a town meeting rather tetchily noted that they still did not have a school or a teacher. They did managed to appoint a teacher later in the year. In 1656, the town records say:

It is agreed by the select of Dorchester in the behalf of the town, and Thomas Wiswall and his son Icabod Wiswall as follows: Icabod with the consent of his father shall, from 7 of March unto the end of three full years, instruct and teach in a free school in Dorchester all such children as by the inhabitants shall be committed unto his care in English, Latin and Greek, as from time to time the children shall be capable, and also instruct them in writing as he shall be able. It is to be understood such

children who are entered already knowe their letters and to spell somewhat.

Also provided the school house be kept in good order, and comfortable for a man to abide in both in summer and winter by providing fire so that it may neither be prejudicial to master nor scholar. In case of palpable neglect and matter of complaint and not reformed, it shall not bind the master to endanger his health.

The Selectmen of Dorchester shall every year pay unto Icabod or his Father by his Assignment the full sum of twenty five pounds, two thirds in wheat, peas or barley merchantable, and one third in Indian [corn], at or before the First of March during the three years.

So the teacher was paid in wheat or other crops rather than money, and for this, he was expected to teach Latin and Greek. The families were expected to start educating children themselves, before starting school.

The school still exists. It is the Mather School, Boston, and it claims to be the oldest public elementary school in North America.

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There are no references to Robert Deeble after this time. This means that our knowledge of him is restricted to 11 years from 1633 to 1642. Everything else is conjecture.

Where did he come from? It would be somewhere in the West Country of England, because he left England from Weymouth, in Dorset, as did his children, Thomas and Frances. Dibble (with all its variants) was a common West Country surname, and Robert, Thomas and Frances are common first names. Plenty of records were lost, or perhaps never made (since this was a non-conforming family) so it is hard to be sure of this particular Dibble family's origins.



The other question is: what happened after 1642? The simplest idea is that he died in Dorchester, Massachusetts. The Dorchester church records concentrated on baptisms so dates of deaths are hard to establish.

There is a more intriguing possibility. The conflict between the king, Charles I, and Puritans or non-conformists in Parliament has been mentioned at the start of this chapter. This conflict had grown, and eventually ended in war, the English Civil War (1642–1651). The Massachusetts Bay Colony had been founded by Puritans, so many of them decided to return to England to fight in this war. The war was won by Oliver Cromwell, and more colonists decided to return to England since it was now a fit place for them to live, being under righteous rule. (Too righteous for many British, and once Cromwell has died, the monarchy was restored with King Charles II, but never mind...)

So could Robert Deeble be one of these returning Puritans? It is possible, but there is no evidence, unfortunately. His son Thomas stayed in America (see next chapter).

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Was Robert a pioneer? Surely, he was. He was not in the first ship which founded Dorchester, he was not the first bailiff of the town. But he was among the first, there or thereabouts. He helped to build the town, ploughing the ground, looking after the animals, taking office, helping to fund the new school. He voted in early town meetings and signed the church covenant. He was "amongst the first to settle a new country."



Thomas the Elder

of Windsor, Connecticut, c.1613-1700

Like his father Robert, the first reference to Thomas is a name on the passenger list of a ship sailing from Weymouth, England to Dorchester, Massachusetts. This ship is unnamed, and sailed two years later, in 1635. This passenger list is more detailed than Robert's ship, giving whole families, including young children. It also gives ages, occupations and relationships. Thomas Dible is described as husbandman, aged 22. This means that Thomas must have been born around 1613. A husbandman was a skilled farm worker who did not own his own land, which made him a good candidate for emigration.

Accompanying Thomas is his sister, Francis Dible, aged 24. Unfortunately we lose sight of Frances from this point. Perhaps she never sailed, or died, or perhaps she married, and we do not know her married name. You can see why the genealogists follow the men.

We saw from the last chapter that when Thomas arrived, he received a couple of land grants next to his father, but we hear no more about him in the Dorchester records. What happened to him?

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During the early 1630's, Governor Winthrop's diary described each ship as it arrived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, but by 1635, he just says: "*There came in seven other ships, and one to Salem, and four more to the mouth of the bay, with store of passengers and cattle. They all came within six weeks.*" Presumably Thomas and Frances Dible's ship was one of these. This shows that the colony was becoming more popular. More ships were arriving, the colony's population was increasing, and the towns were beginning to get over-crowded.

English and Dutch colonies started at the coast, because those were the most accessible places. However people were starting to look inland. The Connecticut River is west of the Massachusetts coast. Winthrop's diary says, in 1633:

*The company of Plymouth sent a bark to Connecticut, at this time, to erect a trading house there. When they came, they found the Dutch had built there, and did forbid the Plymouth men to proceed; but they set up their house notwithstanding, about a mile above the Dutch.*

Both the Plymouth settlers and the Dutch were sailing up the river, from its mouth in the south. But a trader had discovered an overland route from the Massachusetts coast to the Connecticut River. He reckoned the journey to be about one hundred and sixty miles. This started to give people ideas. In 1634, the Pastor of Newtown Massachusetts, Mr. Hooker, asked for permission to move his congregation to settle on the Connecticut River. Winthrop's diary describes the meeting:

*But the main business was about the removal of Newtown. They had leave, the last general court, to look out some place for enlargement or removal, with promise of having it confirmed to them, if it were not prejudicial to any other plantation; and now they moved, that they might have leave to remove to Connecticut. This matter was debated divers days, and many reasons alleged pro and con.*

*The principal reasons for their removal were*

- 1. Their want of accommodation for their cattle, so as they were not able to maintain their ministers, nor could receive any more of their friends to help them; and here it was alleged by Mr. Hooker, as a fundamental error, that towns were set so near each to other.*
- 2. The fruitfulness and commodiousness of Connecticut, and the danger of having it possessed by others, Dutch or English.*
- 3. The strong bent of their spirits to remove thither.*



The map shows how close the colony's towns were. This makes it hard for them to expand. The idea of losing Connecticut to the Dutch, or the people of Plymouth, seems to be equally worrying.

*Against these it was said,*

- 1. That, in point of conscience, they ought not to depart from us, being knit to us in one body, and bound by oath to seek the welfare of this commonwealth.*
- 2. That, in point of state and civil policy, we ought not to give them leave to depart, being we were now weak and in danger to be assailed.*
- 3. The departure of Mr. Hooker would not only draw many from us, but also divert other friends that would come to us.*
- 4. We should expose them to evident peril, both from the Dutch (who made claim to the same river, and had already built a fort there) and from the Indians, and also from our own state at home, who would not endure they should sit down without a patent in any place which our king lays claim unto.*
- 5. They might be accommodated at home by some enlargement which other towns offered.*
- 6. They might remove to Merimack, or any other place within our patent.*
- 7. The removing of a candlestick is a great judgment, which is to be avoided.*

These arguments for and against are plainly put (except the last, which I find frankly baffling! Something to do with Revelations, I believe.) There was a brisk debate, a close vote, which was disputed, then a "day of humiliation to seek the Lord". Finally

*the congregation of Newtown came and accepted of such enlargement as had formerly been offered them by Boston and Watertown; and so the fear of their removal to Connecticut was removed.*

And that should have been that. Except...

*[Later in 1634:] A message from the Pekod sachem, to desire our friendship... The reason that they desired so much our friendship was, because they were now in war with the Naragansetts ... and likewise with the Dutch who had killed their old sachem. ... They offered us also all their right at Connecticut, and to further us what they could, if we would settle a plantation there.*

The Pekod and the Naragansetts were Indians. A 'sachem' was a chief. There was also trouble around this time between the Plymouth trading post and the Dutch:

*[Later in 1634:] By letter from Plymouth it was certified, that the Dutch of Hudson's River had been at Connecticut, and came in war-like manner to put the Plymouth men out of their house there; but when they stood upon their defence, they departed, without offereing any violence.*

Dorchester decided to make their move.

*August 1635: The Dorchester men being set down at Connecticut, near the Plymouth trading house, the governor, Mr. Bradford, wrote to them, complaining of it as an injury, in regard of their possession and purchase of the Indians, whose right it was, and the Dutch sent home into Holland for commission to deal with our people at Connecticut.*

Naughty Dorchester! And, despite these complaints of the Dutch and Plymouth:

*October 1635: About sixty men, women, and little children, went by land toward Connecticut with their cows, horses, and swine, and, after a tedious and difficult journey, arrived safe there.*

People from Dorchester had decided to move to Connecticut, without asking permission of anyone. The journey was a hundred and sixty miles, with small children, and livestock.

The first winter was tough:

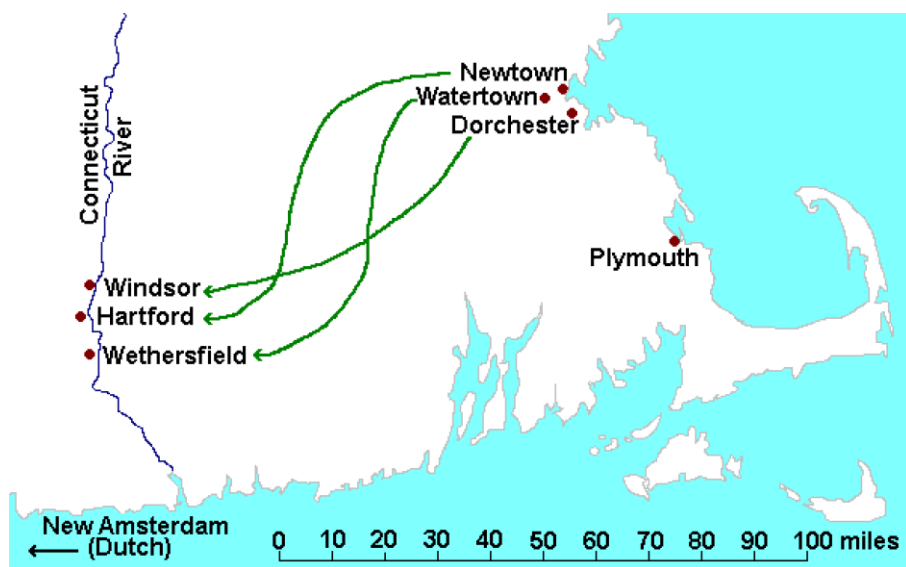
*1636: Those of Dorchester, who had removed their cattle to Connecticut before winter, lost the greater part of them this winter... The people were also put to great straits for want of provision. They eat acorns, and malt, and grains. They lost nearly £2000 worth of cattle.*

But they survived.

So what about the people of Newtown, who had asked permission, been refused, and accepted the decision? Despite the experiences of the Dorchester people:

*1636: Mr. Hooker, pastor of the church at Newtown, and most of his congregation, went to Connecticut. His wife was carried in a horse litter; and they drove one hundred and sixty of their cattle, and fed of their milk by the way.*

People from Watertown also moved to the Connecticut River. The three towns each took their own area. Dorchester settled at the Plymouth trading post and called it Windsor. The Newtown people took over the Dutch fort and called it Hartford. Watertown had a town south of Hertford, called Wethersfield.



These three new towns started as part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, but soon they became the new Connecticut Colony, with an administration based in Hartford.

And eventually both Plymouth and the Dutch gave up and left them to it!

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This was a mass exodus. The reasons given above included lack of space in their original towns, plus a desire to spite the Dutch and Plymouth. But Dorchester may have had an additional reason.

A town in these times was a congregation led by its minister. Dorchester had two ministers, John Warham and Mr. John Maverick. These had been appointed back in England, in 1630, before the first ship sailed to

Massachusetts. Around 1635, Mr. Warham led his congregation to Dorchester. In 1636, Mr. Maverick died. And after this, Winthrop's diary says:

Mr. Mather and others, of Dorchester, intending to begin a new church there, (a great part of the old one being gone to Connecticut,) desired the approbation of the other churches and of the magistrates.

But then during that meeting Mr Mather seemed to change his mind and said that the people left in Dorchester were not yet fit to form a new church:

The reason was, for that most of them (Mr. Mather and one more excepted) had builded their comfort of salvation upon unsound grounds.

Mr. Mather seems to have had a high opinion of himself. A few months later he relented, and got everyone to swear a new covenant (see last chapter). This included *mutual instruction, reprehension, exhortation and spiritual watchfulness over one another for good*, which sounds a bit creepy. It is tempting to wonder if many people in Dorchester decided that they preferred to follow their old minister, Mr Warham, to Connecticut rather than cope with this new one!

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To move the story back to our family, Robert Deeble certainly stayed in Dorchester, and signed Mr. Mather's covenant. Thomas did not sign the covenant, and is next heard of in Windsor, Connecticut. He seems to have been part of the move.



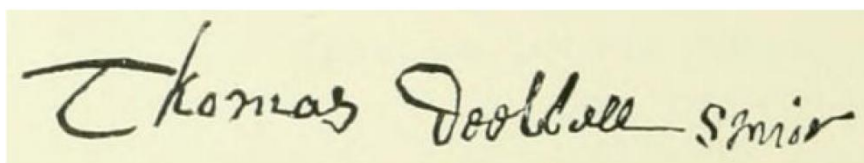
Was there a family row, with Robert demanding Thomas stay in Dorchester to help the family farm, and Thomas refusing? Or did Thomas go with Robert's blessing, while Robert felt he was too old for the move? Robert seems to have benefitted from staying behind. There was a big land redistribution around this point, and Robert acquired up 30 acres. He became town bailiff, as well (see last chapter).

But Thomas decided to seek his life elsewhere. Thomas was 20 years old when his father sailed for America and left him behind, and for two years in England he must have looked after his own affairs. He then joined his father in America, and in Dorchester he was merely his father's son again. Perhaps Thomas wanted to regain his independence.

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We now move to Windsor, Thomas' new town.

Thomas seems to have even more versions of his surname than his father did. Here is Thomas' own signature, with presumably his preferred spelling: "Deebbell".



Thomas describes himself as 'senior' as he had a son called Thomas as well.

There is a very old record of Windsor called Matthew Grant's Old Church Record 1639-1681 (see bibliography). It starts with *A list of those members of the church that were in Dorchester and came up here with Mr Warham and still are of us*. Matthew Grant was part of the move himself, so he knew what he was writing about.

Included in this list is *Thomas Deble senr*, which establishes Thomas as one of original group who founded Windsor(give or take some people from Plymouth, and the local Indians).

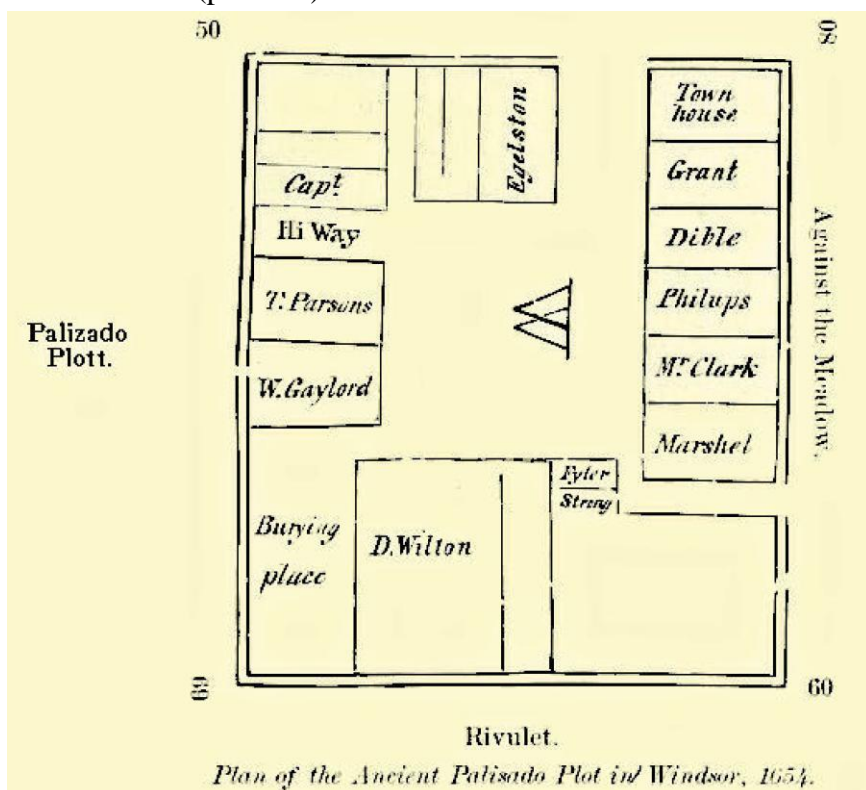
Tho. Debls Wife is also mentioned. Here is yet another unnamed wife. I am not sure when Thomas married her. She did not travel to America with him, or she would have been listed on the passenger list. And it seems unlikely that he managed to marry her in the few short months before moving to Windsor. Perhaps they married after the move, but Grant's list gives her current name and status rather than her original one. Again, it shows how women drop out of the records.

The Public Records of Connecticut (see bibliography) say: *Aprill the IXth, 1640. The Court of Election. ... These were made Free:- ... Thomas Dyblie.*

So Thomas was a freeman, entitled to vote in local affairs. As a founder of the town and a long-time resident (he was about 23 at the move, and died when he was 87) he must have been a respected person in the town. This is why I have called him Thomas the Elder. This respectability must have caused him embarrassment for one incident in his life, but you will have to wait for that!

~~~~~

These settlers were farmers, and for this they needed land. In his book "A Book of Town Wayes", Matthew Grant gave a map of part of Windsor called the Palisado (palisade). It is dated 1654.



This version of the map has been redrawn by Henry Stiles, a nineteenth century local historian (see bibliography). You can see that Dible has a plot of land here. This is our Thomas. There are other interesting names here, such as Fyler, W. Gaylord, Egelston and, of course, Grant himself. These people are mentioned in the original Dorchester records before the move, so they are founders of Windsor.

The numbers round the edge are rods, a land measurement of five and a half yards.

Matthew Grant (who was, remember, an original inhabitant of the town) wrote:

*I will speak a little of the origin of [the palisado]; about 1637 years, when the English had war with the Pequot Indians, our inhabitants gathered themselves nearer together from their remote dwellings to provide for their safety, set up on fortifying, and with palizado. ... It was laid out in small plots. ... When peace was again restored, divers men left their places [in the Palizado] and returned to their plots [outside] for their conveniences. Some that stayed (by consent of the town) enlarged their gardens.*

This explanation makes it clear that the Palisado is a small part of the town, although possibly its heart. Thomas owned other land, outside the Palisado, as well. These plots of land were often changing, as they were bought and sold, or bequeathed in wills.

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Before describing the embarrassing incident in Thomas' life, we must introduce the characters. First, there are five of the children of Thomas: Israel (born in 1637), Ebenezer (1641), Samuel (1644), Meriam (1645) and Thomas (1647). To sort out the Thomases, Thomas the Elder ('our' Thomas) is Thomas senior, and his son is Thomas Junior.

Samuel married Hephzibah Bartlet on 21 Jan 1669. The following day, both of them visited Hephzibah's brother, Benjamin Bartlet and his wife, Deborah. Israel was also there. And something happened (or did not happen...) This led Benjamin Bartlet to bring a complaint against his wife. The legal papers are on the web (see bibliography). They are hand-written (unfortunately, not always legible). The following is a transcription. It is written by a magistrate.

March 1 1669: Benjamin Bartlet did complain to me against his wife that shee had committed adultery with Israell Dibble.

The same day Deborah Bartlett being Brought before me did confesse that she had committed adultery with Israell Dibble.

March 1 1669: Thomas Dibble Senr doth binde himselfe in the somme of one hundred pounds to this consideration that his sonne Israell Dibble shall appeare at the Countie Court at Hartford on Thursday next to answere to such complaints as there shall be made against him.

Acknowledged before me - Henry Wolcot

I gave the Constable Sargeant Blouditr Allford charge of the woman until further order from the Court.

Henry Wolcot is judging the case. This charge is a serious matter. From the Public Records of the Connecticut Colony:

Capitall Lawes established by the Generall Court: The First of December, 1642 ...

If any person committeth adultery with a married or espoused wife, the adulterer and the adulteres shall surely be put to death. Le: 20.10 & 18.20 : Deu: 22.23, 24.

Thomas puts up bail of £100 to guarantee that Israel will turn up to the court to be tried. This is a large amount of money. No-one puts up bail for Deborah Bartlet. Well, her husband is hardly going to, is he? And she has made a confession of guilt.

Here is the warrant to tell people to appear before the court:

Those are in his Majesties name to require you to bring before me at my house this day at one of the clock in the afternoon:

Israell Dibble and Deborah the wife of Benjamin Bartlet to answer the complaint of the said Benjamin Bartlet the woman's husband for suspicion of adultery - Faile not

You are allsoe to warne all such parsons to appeare as wittnesses as the said Benjamin shall name unto you.

*March the 1:1669 Henry Wolcot Assistant
To the Constables of Windsore or either of them*

Now for the first testimony:

Samll Dible & Hephsiba Dible his wife testify that ye next day after they were married they were at ye house of their Brother Benjamin Barlet & Benjamin Bartlet went for a botle of cider: & in ye time while he was gone his wife was out of ye house in a litl space of time Israell Dible went out after her & they both continued out about ye space of half an hour: & Benjamin Bartlet coming in and not finding his wife inquired for her & called her But could have no answer. A small space after she came in & a small space after her he came in.

Further Samll Dible testifies that when she came in her husband asked her where she had bin she said at Thomas Fowler & they asked him where he had bin he said at neiburs house & they perceived that his knees had bin in the dirt: and her coat had also ? of dirt by which as allso her light carriage afterward they were suspicious that they had bin uaught together & informed her husband of it.

Hephsiba Dible futher testified that ye next daiy following she had discours with her abut it in Benjamin Barlets chamber & she tould her that she had commited ye act with Israell Dible & her life was in her husband's hand & Samll Dible testifies ye same.

So, Samuel and his new wife claim that while they were at the Barlet's house, Benjamin went out for a bottle of cider. While he was away, his wife, Deborah, left the house, followed by Israel. When Benjamin came back and found his wife gone, he called for her but no answer. After a bit Deborah and Israel returned. They claimed that they had been visiting neighbours. However, Samuel and Hepsibah noticed that Israel had dirty knees (!), and Deborah had dirt on her coat, and a "*light carriage*". They promptly imagined the worst, and told her husband. Hepsibah also claimed that Deborah had admitted "*ye act*" the next day.

While Hepsibah might have been protecting her brother's honour, Samuel's testimony risks causing the execution of his own brother, Israel.

On the back of that testimony is some hand-writing which is infuriatingly faint. It seems to say (with big gaps):

..... and as she was waiting her husband came in and asked for her we tould we could not see ... talking together ... suspicious ... The next day ... told us Israel took her by the arm & layd her downe & would have forced her but she said she would cry out. He sayd he would stop her mouth with his Glove

This sounds as if Deborah is defending herself against a charge of adultery by claiming that it was rape.

All we have are these papers, recorded by the court. However, I suspect that at this point, Thomas the Elder called a family meeting. Whatever anyone thought of Israel and his behaviour, this could end up with him executed, using the testimony of his own brother. The next few pages sound very much like the results of family brain-storming, for ways to get Israel found Not Guilty of this charge.

The first result was additional testimony by Samuel and Hepsibah.

To the Honrabol court, I present for information though our first concern was so as we have already given in, conserning the dirt of his knees, upon more serious consideration, the cause of that might be with Drawing of cider in a dirty cellar and the more cause we have to think so by reason of the snow was then so deep on the grownd, and concerning thire going forth of doore we cannot say they went forth of the doore at that time, but out of the roome whoure we ware though thay came in at the doore afterward

Samuell Dibell

Haphzibah Diebll H her mark

March 2 1669

Samuel and Hepsibah are frantically back-tracking. (It must have been a very angry family meeting!) They cannot change their previous testimony too much, as then they would be guilty of perjury. But they try to weaken it in three ways.

The dirty knees "upon more serious consideration" might have been caused by drawing cider in a dirty cellar (rather than engaging in "ye act" with Deborah).

There was snow on the ground, so Israel's knees would not have got dirty doing "ye act" outside.

They had not said that Deborah and Israel had left the house, only that they had left the room.

The last point might seem odd to us, especially since Deborah and Israel had not answered to Benjamin calling them, and anyway, what does it matter where "ye act" was done? But if the house was small, presumably everyone would have overheard something going on. It still leaves the

question as to what Deborah and Israel were doing, together or separately, during their time away!

Hepsibah is illiterate, since she has to sign with her mark, which is witnessed by someone else.

Now the rest of the family join in, starting, naturally, with Thomas the Elder:

The testimony Thomas Dible aged 55 years

I do testify that my son Sammel and Hephshibah his wife say that they could not say that their brother Israel went out of the house but out of that room I do further testify that it being demanded why they did not testify to the whole truth when they wer at Mr. Wolcott they sayd they wer not called to testify for him then but they would testify for ther brother Israel when they were called fo it

Ebenezer Dible aged 21 years or there about do testify the sam with his father above written

Thomas backs up Samuel and Hepsibah in their new testimony about being out of the room rather than the house, and explains that they did not mention it before, because no-one asked them. Ebenezer does not add anything new, but shows family solidarity.

Thomas has a bit more to add, backed up by his son, Thomas.

This testimony of Thomas Dible aged 55 years old and Thomas Dible his son aged 21 years testifies that Benjamin Barlet did say that he went out that next morning to see and he further sed he was apt to thinks that which was sed to be dun was not dun where she sed it was but sumwhere else.

owned By Ben: Barlet - May 26 1669

The dates show that some of this was added later.

The two Thomases say that Benjamin Bartlet had tried to find out where "that which was sed to be dun" actually happened. Deborah had claimed it happened in a certain place, and they claim that Benjamin did not think it had. Benjamin agrees with this. Remember that Deborah is claiming Israel raped her. If they can prove that she was lying, then it discredits all of her statements, including the original confession of adultery.

This testimony of Jone Dible aged 55 years and Mary Ann Dible aged 22 years or thereabouts do both testify that we heard Sammuel Dible and Hephriba his wife say they did think their brother Israel was not guilty of that bisnis about ther sister Deborah.

Hm... We're building up a pretty collection of euphemisms! By the way, the terms "brother" and "sister" are a little confusing. "Sister Deborah" is the wife of the brother of Hepsibah, and "Brother Israel" is the brother of her husband. So they are not actually brother and sister!

We seem to have two new people, Jone and Mary Anne. But I think that they are actually Thomas senior and his daughter Miriam. The different pages have different hand-writings, and the new clerk thought that Thomas was called John (at this time a capital T looked like a J, and names were often abbreviated), and Miriam was called Mary Anne.

More from Miriam, who obviously was a good contributor to the original family meeting (if it ever happened...)

Worshipfull Sirs I doe here testify that the first night after the wedding when my brother Israel came home he pulled off his stockings & they were so wett & dirty that I pind them up by the foot that the knees might be dried out by the fire and the second night when he came home again I said his stockings were wet & dirty He said that they were now rather worse than the night before because now in kneeling down to bore(?) the

*barrell lower to draw I overturned a dish that stood under the barrell to
save the droppings. This witnesseth
the marks of Miriam Dibbell
This testimony sworn in court May 26 1669 ? John Asstn Secy*

Miriam is also illiterate, but she has a quick mind. She remembers Israel telling her why his stockings were so dirty after Samuel and Hepsibah's wedding. The second night after the wedding (when all this "bisnis" happened) was caused when he was drawing drink from a barrel, and the drip-tray got knocked over.

*Mariam Deble sayeth that day a little before night the night she sayeth this
act was don, she was ought in the orchard and the snow as fare as she
could see was of a great deapth. Mirriam Deble of age 22 years
March 17 1669 Sworn in court May 26 ? Asst John Allyn Secy*

Back to the snow. Miriam remembers how deep the snow was - not very suitable conditions for "this act" to be done outside, or producing dirty knees.

The dates show that Miriam's testimony happened in March, but she swore to it in May, which explains the dates.

Thomas junior add confirmation about the snow.

*Thomas Deble junior of the age of 21 years about sayeth that about an
hower before sonnset that night the woman sayeth the act was don he road
into the orchyard to gather a stick for his horse and then the snow was of
a great depth as of ? in that orchyard to the best of my remembrance
March 17th 1669 Thomas Dibel*

And that's it, unfortunately. No more testimony, and no indication as to what the verdict was.

I think we can be fairly confident that there was a Not Guilty verdict. Both Israel and Deborah survived past this point, according to internet genealogies. What is more, they continued to have children with their partners, so they were not divorced (which were allowable in cases of adultery). It seems as if, once Thomas' family rallied behind his son Israel, and caused enough doubt about the evidence, the case just collapsed. I do wonder if the Barlet family and the Dibble family ever spoke to each other again!

But what on earth did happen? Why did Deborah keep changing her story? The punishment for adultery was so appalling that she was shifting from one story to another, desperately trying to save her own life. That could be true whether she was innocent or "the act was don". A nasty thought is that perhaps Israel did rape her. She started by trying to cover it up, and when she changed her story, no-one believed her. I do hope that is not true. But we will never know.

Quite apart from the story itself, these documents give the ages and names of the 'Deble' family. These all match the other records we have. It also gives a snapshot of the family in action, with Thomas the Elder firmly in control.

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Thomas died in 1700. Here is his will:

*Dibble, Thomas, Sen., Windsor. Invt. £66-14-01. Taken 1st November, 1700, by Samuel Cross, Nathaniel Gaylord and Alexander Allen. Will dated 17 February, 1700:*

*I, Thomas Dibble, Sen., of Windsor, doe make this my last will and testament:*

*Imprimis : To my son Samuel and his wife I give the north half part of my orchard whereon he liveth, during his natural life, and the remainder to his son Samuel.*

*To my son Thomas Dibble and his wife I give the other half of my orchard during life, and the remainder to his son Abram.*

*Item. I give to my daughter Miriam Gillett that two acres of meadow she now possesseth.*

*Item. To my said daughter Miriam I give, for the use of her son, my best broadcloth coat, hatt and breeches.*

*All the rest of my apparel to be divided, two parts to my sons Samuel and Thomas, the other part to be to my grandsons Josiah Dibble and Wakefield Dibble.*

*I appoint Mr. John Elliot and son-in-law Samuel Gibbs to be executors.*

*Witness: John Eliot, Alexander Allin.*

*Thomas X Dibble, Senior.*

*A schedule, expressing the form and manner how I would have my household stuffe and other moveables disposed and divided, is as follows :*

*To my daughter Miriam 2 pewter basons, 1 platter, 1 quart pot, two porringers, one saucer, one dram cup, a chafendish, a chopping knife, 2 old skilletts, a settle, and the cest (chest) that use to stand by my bedside, five yards of tow cloth and 40 shillings in pay, to be paid by my son-in-law Samuel Gibbs out of that he oweth me.*

*To my grand daughter, Eliza: Gibbs, the bedstead, feather bed, and all thereto appertaining, which is in the parlour, 1 iron pot and crooks, best table, and box with lock and key, 3 chairs, best brush, 1 square basket, one pressing iron, best shears, one bodkin, pair stilliards.*

*To Experience Gibbs, 1 iron kettle, 2 chairs, an old chest, the trundle bedstead, bed and green rug, best and worst pillows, 1 little table and a gridiron.*

*To Mirriam Gibbs, the worst of ye beds and bedstead, 1 blue rug, one of the best pillows, the bolster, 2 blankets, the worst table and a little basket.*

*To Hepzibah Dickson, a brass candlestick.*

*To Patience Denslow, a half pint cup and a corn bowl.*

*To Joanna Loomis, 2 smoothing irons and a pair of pot hooks.*

*To the Rev. Mr. Samuel Mather, Senior, my gun and sword and my andirons, tongs and spit.*

*Witness: John Elliott, Alexander Allin.*

*Thomas X Dibble, Senior.*

Thomas was 87 when he died. This is very old. Could we have inadvertently missed a generation? Is this "our" Thomas, or his son?

We can check this. The episode described previously, with Israel and Deborah doing "ye act" (or not), has legal papers giving the family, with their ages. Thomas is 55 at the time, in 1669, and that matches his age of 22 in 1635. He has four sons: Israel, Ebenezer, Samuel and Thomas. He has one daughter, Miriam.

In the will, Thomas has two sons, Samuel and Thomas, plus a daughter, Miriam (who has married, and so is now Miriam Gillett). He has two grandsons, Josiah and Wakefield. He has a son-in-law, Samuel Gibbs.

We know that Thomas' sons, Israel and Ebenezer, had died by this time. Their oldest sons were Josiah and Wakefield. Thomas actually had two daughters, Miriam and (another) Hepsibah, and Hepsibah married Samuel Gibbs. She had died by this time. I assume that she was not involved in the Israel and Deborah case, as she was already married at that point, and so belonged to a different family.

So everything matches, and this is definitely Thomas, son of Robert, and he was 87 when he died. Impressive.

It is fun to read Thomas' property, down to the last "half pint cup". However, who are all these people getting his property, and why?

Samuel Gibbs, his son-in-law, mentions in his own will *deceased daughter Hepsibah Dickinson, Patience Denslow, Elizabeth Hayden, Joannah Loomis, Experience Huxley and Miriam Bissell*. So a lot of Thomas' household goods are going to his dead daughter's family. Perhaps Thomas was living with them at the time of his death, as he was so old. He signs his will with a mark, when we know that he is literate, so perhaps he is very frail by this time.

Whether for this reason or some other, this will caused problems:

*May 1702: Allowed to Mr John Elliott and to Mr Samll Gibbs the sume of one pound eighteen shillings and sixe pence for attendance at the court of assistants at Newhaven in Octobr last and at this Generall Assembly, upon the application of Samll Dibble, Thomas Dibble and Miriam Gillett, children of Thomas Dibble late of the town of Windzor deceased ; the said Samll, Thomas, and Miria, being unsatisfied with the settlment of the estate of their said father according to a will exhibited in court.*

And the following year:

*May 1703: Miriam Gillett, widdowe, being unsatisfied with the settlment of the estate of her father Thomas Dibble of Windzor decd, made by the court of probates at Hartford Novembr 13, 1701, grounded upon a writing presented in said court of probates as the last will and testament of her said father, petitioned this Assembly for libertie to contest the said will in the court of Assistants in May next. This Court grants her petition.*

Frustratingly, we do not know why the complaint was made. Samuel Gibbs was supposed to pay Miriam 40 shillings - a debt owed to Thomas. Perhaps he never got round to this. Or perhaps the whole family were

suspicious at Samuel Gibbs's handling of the whole will, since he helped write the will, and his own family benefitted from it.

Unfortunately, we do not know if Miriam was successful. But she was certainly prepared to fight her case at law, by herself. Remember her strong showing in the Israel and Deborah case, as well. Women were starting to not only have a name in the historical records, but a character as well.

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If Robert, Thomas' father, was a pioneer, then so was Thomas. He travelled from England to Massachusetts, like his father. He moved again, to help found one of the first towns in Connecticut. He also raised a flourishing family, defending one of them vigorously in court when necessary. Finally, he lived to a good age, leaving land and property to those he loved. His son, Ebenezer, was not so lucky.

Ebenezer the Soldier

1641-1675

We have met Ebenezer in the last chapter, when he gave evidence in the Israel and Deborah case. His testimony was very short, though, and limited to backing up his father. His brothers seemed to have stronger personalities.

Ebenezer was born in Windsor, Connecticut. He married Mary Wakefield, in New Haven, Connecticut, on the coast, rather than a local Windsor girl. They had several children. Their baptisms are given in Matthew Grant's Old Church Records, which shows that the couple returned to live in Windsor. However, there is something odd about these baptisms. The record says:

The persons .. as they tendered themselves publickly, to attayn baptisme for thir children (from the time Mr Warham first begann untill he layed it downe) and remayne so still and have not put one for full communion. ... Decmbr . 11 . 64 . Ebenzr Deble ...

There is an earlier "explanation":

It had been the practice to call such persons in publique, to stand forth and answer to questions of catechism propounded to them and to own the church covinant. And the time which Mr Warham first begann this practice was January 31, 1657 and went onne in the practice of it untill March 19, 1664 which day he declared to the church that he had met with such arguments against the practice concerning the baptizing of members [chi]ldren, that he could not get throw at present, and could not goe one in practis as hee had don without scrupiel of conscience, therefore must forebare to give [] not that he intended to cast of the practice holy, but only to delaye it for a time till he could better be able to answer his present scruples, for if he should act and not of faith Rom.14 would be sin to him.

This sounds rather confusing. Mr Warham was the minister who led his congregation from Dorchester to Windsor. What happened was that Mr Warham first tried to follow something called the Half-Way Covenant, but gave up because so many people argued against it, and he was not too certain of it himself. So what is the Half-Way Covenant?

The first settlers (such as Thomas and his father Robert) were strongly religious people. They had decided that only adults with personal experience of conversion were eligible to full membership of the church. Children shared in the covenant of their parents and therefore could be baptised, and were admitted to all the privileges of the church except communion.

Ebenezer, like his brothers and sisters, was second generation, born in America. He was baptised himself, but had not had this "personal experience of conversion". He was allowed to attend church services (except communion), but what about his children? Could they be baptised?

In 1662, the Half-Way Covenant said Yes. This required a parent just to stand forth and answer to questions of catechism propounded to them and to own the church covenant. Then they could get their child baptised. But this was controversial. Mr Warham started following this Half-Way Covenant and baptised Ebenezer's children. Later, Mr Warham changed his mind. I am not sure whether Ebenezer ever underwent a "personal conversion" to become a full member of the Windsor church.

Ebenezer was a respected member of his community, though. He became Freeman of Windsor in 1670, which shows that he was a voting member of the community, and he also took an office.

Dec 31 1672 Ebenezer Dibble was by town vote chosen for town Baylif for the year ensuing, to go forth when required by the townsmen to fetch in town rates of those that refuse or neglect to pay their rates when

demanded, and the Bayliff is allowed to take three pence upon a shilling for his pains.

This was following in his grandfather Robert's footsteps, although Ebenezer might not have realised this.

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However, Ebenezer's life took a new turn. He became a soldier, fighting the Indians. Here is some background.

At the start of English settlement in New England, the relationship between Indians and settlers had been good. Back in the winter of 1630, Roger Clap mentioned that the starving Dorchester settlers had bought corn from the Indians. Before the move to Connecticut in 1635, one Indian group, the Pekod, had encouraged the move, to help them in their war against the Naragansetts, another Indian group. However, the situation started to turn sour.

The settlers had brought small pox with them, and the Indians had little immunity to this. Winthrop's diary says:

*November 1633: A great mortality among the Indians. Chickatabot, the sagamore of Naponsett, died, and many of his people. The disease was the small pox.*

*January 1634: Hall and the two others, who went to Connecticut November 3, came now home, having lost themselves and endured much misery. They informed us, that the small pox was gone as far as any Indian plantation was known to the west, and much people dead of it, by reason whereof they could have no trade.*

Tensions started to grow between the two communities. The description of the Palisade in the last chapter mentions 1637, when the English had war with the Pequot Indians.

Finally, the settlers were needing more and more land. There were new settlers coming from England, and the exiting settlers had large families, who grew up and needed land of their own.

There were different Indian peoples, so combining to oppose the settlers was difficult. But finally an Indian leader arose. His name was Metacomet, called by the settlers "King Philip". His aim was to push the settlers out of New England. This was the First Indian War, known as King Philip's War (1675–78).



The Indians raided the settlers' homes and attacked their towns. Windsor had its Palisade as defence against Indian attacks. The colonists from Massachusetts and Connecticut combined to counter-attack. One of the fights was the Great Swamp Fight, in 1675. Finally, in 1676, King Philip was killed.

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Ebenezer was involved in the local militia before this. In 1667, he is described as a dragoon, and receives a pouch from Thomas Dibble

(probably his brother rather than his father). In 1668, he is paid for making half pikes, presumably for his troop.

At the time of the outbreak of King Philip's War,

At a meeting of the Council Octobr, 9th, 1675... The Council doe appoynt the Assist and Comr of Windso take care to provide some corn for the supply of Ebenezer Dible's famaly, who hath been impled in the service of the country.

And then, sadly, later in 1675, Matthew Grant's Old Church Record lists five people dying "*in war*", including Ebenezer Deble.

A letter from Mr. Jones, at New Haven, to Governor Leete, on 19th July 1676, describes the death of King Philip:

I know not whether you yet heare of ye surprisall & killing of Philip, which is credibly informed & affirmed by one James Shore, come in this week to Fairfield, in a vessell from Rhod Island; which was don on this day sennight, 12th instant. One of Phillip's Indians a little before, on discontent, came from him to Rhode Iseland and told ye authority, yt now or never was theire season to meet wth him, and offered his service for guide to ye swamp where he lay. Whereupon Capt. Samfort wth a pickt company of stout and able men, English and Indians, hastened away and being com to ye place which ye Indian had described to ym, by his direcon laid som English and Indians in ambush at ye passage out, and ye rest brake in vpon ym on ye other side. Philip in labouring to escape was shot at first by ye English, but missed, and then shot downe by an Indian. All ye rest but one more killd and one or two wounded escaping. They cut off Philip's head and hands and brought ym away: the said Shore saith yt he might have seene the head could he have staid one hour longer there, but was forced to com away.

This letter ends:

Sr, I pray be pleased wt you can to favour and further ye bearer Widow Dibble, yt her husband's estate may be settled. He was killed at ye swamp fight; died in debt more than his estate. 'Twere a work of mercy to consider ye poore widow and fatherles children.

Ebenezer's will and probate confirms this:

Dibble, Ebenezer, Windsor, who in Warr with the Indians last December is dead.

Inventory £65-05-00.

Taken 11 February, 1676, by Jacob Drake, Matthew Grant, Thomas Dibble.

Estate Insolvent.

Relatives, the widow Mary Dibble, daughter Mary age 11 years, son Wakefield 9 years, Ebenezer 5, John 3 years of age.

So Ebenezer was about 34 years old when he died, and left a widow and four children under the age of 12. I find it upsetting that the rest of the family apparently would not look after Ebenezer's family neither when he was away fighting "in the service of the country", nor after his death. I am glad to say that Ebenezer's wife remarried:

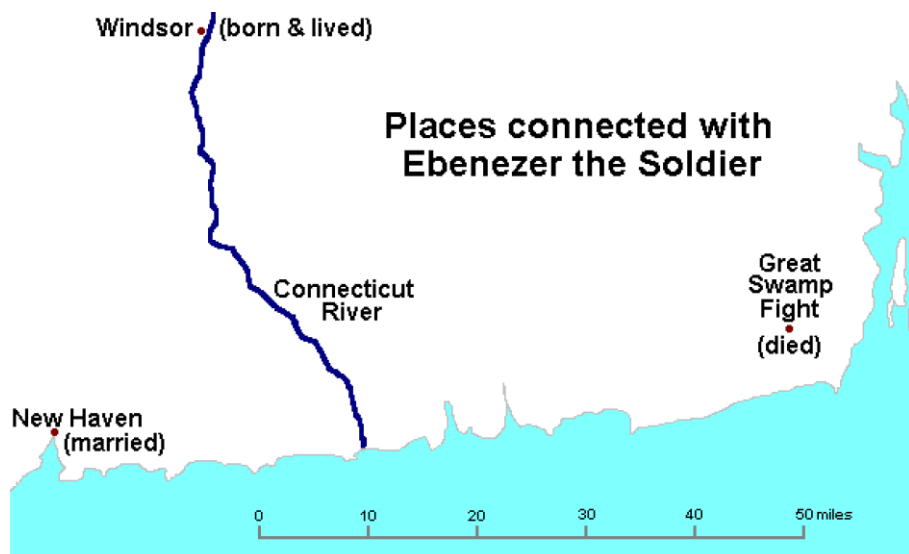
James Hellior and Mary that was the wife of Ebenezer Dible were married June 28th 1677 by Capt Nubery

As for Ebenezer's oldest child, Wakefield, see next chapter.

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In the chapter headings of this book, I usually give a name, a description and a place. Most of the people in this book were born in one place, moved to another as an adult, then lived in the new place for the rest of their lives. That is obviously their place. Ebenezer was different. He was

born in Windsor, lived there, and his children were born there. So presumably he always thought of it as home. But he married away from home, and died young, in war, also away from home.



Was Ebenezer a pioneer? Fighting Indians is, alas, one of the activities of the early pioneers. They were convinced of their rectitude, we are now more critical. Still, it looks as if the Indians and the settlers found it increasingly hard to live side by side, and the Indian King Philip wanted to get rid of the incomers. If settling a new country is being a pioneer, then Ebenezer's soldiering was part of that. I am not saying that being a pioneer is good, just that it exists.

## Wakefield

of Danbury, Connecticut, 1667-1734

This will be a shorter chapter, as the information about Wakefield is scarce. There is a reason for this, which I will come to later.

Matthew Grant's Old Church Record (see last chapter) says:

*Here I set down the names and ages of persons both of men and women kind that have ben borne and baptised in Windfor church and are yet unmarried...*

*Wakefeld sonn of Ebenezer Deble . Sepm . 15 . 67 . baptised May . 17 . 68*

The surname is still turning up variations!

I described in the last chapter that Ebenezer may not have been as fervently religious as his father, Thomas. This can be seen in the choice of their children's names. Thomas' children were Israel, Ebenezer, Hephziba, Samuel, Miriam and Thomas. His youngest son was called after himself, which was common, but the rest are rather overwhelmingly Biblical.

Ebenezer's children were Mary, Wakefield, Ebenezer and John. Ebenezer junior is named after his father, and Mary after her mother. Wakefield is also named for his mother, as it is her surname before she married. This gives less of an oppressively religious feel to the family names (although the name Ebenezer became a family tradition, for a while).

So Wakefield was born in Windsor. We know from the last chapter how Ebenezer, his father, died young, as a soldier in the First Indian War. Wakefield was only 9 years old at the time, and his father's death left the family destitute. His mother did remarry, but presumably her new husband supported the children while young, then expected them to make their own way as adults.



Wakefield tried to settle down in Windsor. He married Sarah Loomis in 1692, when he was 25 years old. Her father had died in 1689, and the will said:

*to the Lane daughter Sarah, £50*

There were problems with this will. In 1693:

*The Brothers-in-Law of Thomas Loomys of Windsor appeared before the Court of Assistants & Desireing This Court to Settle the Father of sayd Loomys his Estate, they being dissatisfied with the Dist. of the County Court.*

Wakefield is one of the brothers-in-law, as this Thomas Loomis is the son of the original Thomas Loomis. He was responsible to distributing the estate, and seems to have not completed it satisfactorily.

So what is Wakefield up to? Has he married this woman because of an outstanding legacy which he then chases? Or has he married her for love (and she is lame, remember) and then taken up her case because she cannot fight it herself? Of course he is not the only one disputing the settlement of the will, so perhaps he just joined the rest of her family.

Sadly, she must have died quite quickly. Wakefield married again, to Jane Fyler, in 1694.

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Wakefield and Jane had several children in Windsor: Ezra, Mary, Sarah and Abigail. Then the family moves to Danbury. Why?

It could be that Wakefield had expectations from his grandfather's will. His grandfather, Thomas Debbell, was a venerable gentleman by now, an original founder of Windsor and in his 80s. He died when he was 87, and I

covered his will two chapters ago. But I am now going to take a look at it from Wakefield's point of view.

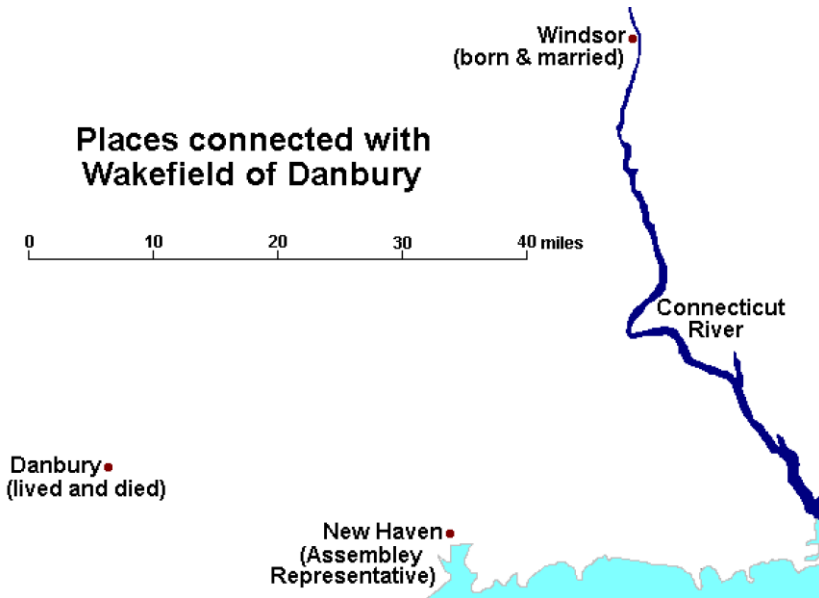
Thomas had four sons and two daughters, but some of these died before him. By the time of his death, he had two surviving sons, Samuel and Thomas, and one daughter, Miriam. The sons get a life interest in land, with their sons inheriting it afterwards. His daughter gets some land as well. The family of the dead daughter get various household goods. But the families of his dead sons, Israel and Ebenezer, are barely mentioned in the will.

To my said daughter Miriam I give, for the use of her son, my best broadcloth coat, hatt and breeches. All the rest of my apparel to be divided, two parts to my sons Samuel and Thomas, the other part to be to my grandsons Josiah Dibble and Wakefield Dibble.

Wakefield gets something, I suppose, but only some of the second-hand clothes, which he shares with his cousins and uncles! Of course, Thomas had lived so long, he had a large family himself, and these were producing children as well, so there was not going to be enough for everyone. But perhaps Wakefield was disappointed in this will. He seems to have decided to follow the principle of his grandfather (and indeed, great grandfather Robert) and moved his family elsewhere to find a living.

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So where should Wakefield's family go? They went to Danbury, in the west of Connecticut.



Why Danbury?

*At a session of the General Assembly in May 1702, a patent was granted, giving town privileges to the inhabitants and proprietors of Danbury.*

So Danbury was a new town, which would accept new settlers. Wakefield was not a founder of Danbury. The town was settled by colonists in 1685. Still Wakefield moved there around 1704, which is only 20 years later. Danbury was still a frontier town.

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At this point, information about Wakefield drops off rapidly. History is based on the evidence that survives. During the American War of Independence, Danbury was an important military supply depot. On 1777, the British burned and looted the city, and all the town records were destroyed. (Bother!)

We have a few items about Wakefield, from other places:

A General Assembly holden at Newhaven, in her Majesties Colony of Connecticut, in New England, on Thursday, the 13th day of October, 1709.

Deputies or Representatives that were present and attended at this Assembly: ... Mr James Beebee, Mr Wakefield Dibble for Danbury.

James Beebee was one of the original founders of Danbury, which shows that this was an important position for Wakefield. But next year:

Oct 1710: Of the Representatives that attended at this Assembly, several were absent, as follows, viz: ... Mr Wakefield Dibble was absent 3 days

Tut, tut!

~~~~~

Another item is about John Dibble, the younger brother of Wakefield. He moved to Bedford, New York, which did manage to keep its records. At a town meeting in Bedford, NY on May 6, 1706 the town desired "*to hire a minister for 20 pounds for a half year... and to make use of John Dibles brother Wackfeld*" to find one. Bedford is west of Danbury. It is good that the brothers kept in touch.

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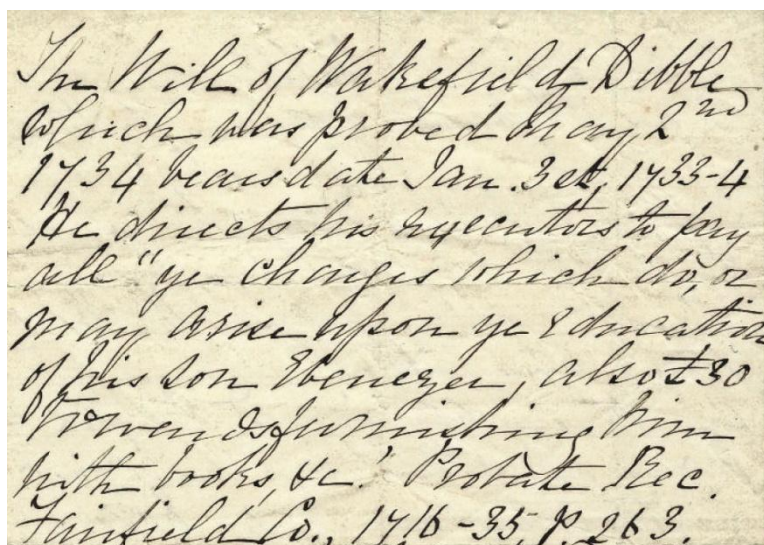
Wakefield and his family did inherit some land through his second wife, Jane. The will of her father Zerubbabell Fyler was dated 1715. His heirs came to a settlement, which gave Wakefield Dibble some land in Suffield. Another will, of John Fyler, in 1723, was settled to give the heirs of Jane Dibell decd some land in Torrington. The family seem to have had closer connections with the mother's family than the father's.

The final piece of information is Wakefield's will. Unfortunately I cannot find the full version, but there are summaries.

The will was dated January 31, 1734 and probated May 2 1734. Wakefield was 67 when he died. The will mentions his wife (Jane) and his large family. His sons were Ezra (oldest), sons John (with property at Pocono, between Danbury and Newtown), Nehemiah (*who is vry lame*) and Ebenezer (youngest). His daughters were Mary Hiccock (deceased), Elizabeth Star, Sarah Hurd, Abigail Star and Experience Dibble.

This will is important, since it ties Wakefield who was born in Windsor with Wakefield who died in Danbury. His wife's name is correct, as are the older children. (The younger ones' Danbury records were destroyed, alas.) Wakefield Dibble's name is also distinctive, so we can be sure that we have the right man.

There is a bit more from the will provided by a 19th century family genealogist. The paper follows, with the transcription afterwards.



The Will of Wakefield Dibble
which was proved May 2nd
1734 bears date Jan. 31st 1733-4
He directs his executors to pay
all "ye charges which do, or
may arise upon ye Education
of his son Ebenezer, also £30
towards furnishing him
with books, &c." Probate Rec.
Fairfield Co., 1716-35, p. 263.

The Will of Wakefield Dibble which was proved May 2nd 1734 bears date Jan.3[1]st 1733-4 He directs his executors to pay all "ye charges which do, or may arise upon ye education of his son Ebenezer, also £30 towards furnishing him with books etc." Probate Rec. Fairfield's Co., 1716-35, P.263.

Ebenezer is the subject of the next chapter.

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So was Wakefield a pioneer? He moved out to a new town, not yet well established, and played his part by representing the town. He had a different reason from his great grandfather and grandfather. Robert moved for reasons of religious freedom. Thomas may have moved to be independent from his father. Wakefield seems to have had too little support from his family, rather than too much. But the towns of the east were filling up, and settlers were moving westwards, hungry for land. They were still pioneers.

## **Ebenezer the Parson**

of Stamford, Connecticut, c.1715-1799

Ebenezer was about 19 years old when his father Wakefield died. As we saw in the last chapter, Wakefield left money for Ebenezer's education, plus £30 for books. Ebenezer was the youngest of a large family. However, he may have been the cleverest. He studied at Yale University in New Haven and got his degree in 1734.

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Ebenezer made several decisions which had an impact on the future of his descendants. The first one might be considered trivial. He is the first person to spell his surname "Dibblee" and that spelling stuck. Any other versions in future are mistakes!

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The next decision was that the young Ebenezer decided to become a Minister. Why? This could have been a genuine religious calling. However, as the youngest child of a large family, he was unlikely to inherit much land or money. But he could make a living from a profession, using his education. This is an important step. From now on, the rest of the people in this book have a profession (although not necessarily a religious one). They became middle class.

The family had been Congregationalists since they came to America, four generations previously. Ebenezer was licensed to preach by the Fairfield East Association of Congregational Ministers in 1735, immediately after graduation. He preached in various local Congregational churches for the next ten years, but he was unable to find a permanent post. So, in 1745, he made another decision, with far-reaching consequences. He decided to join the Church of England (Episcopalian).

This does not sound that important. The Church of England respected the "sober Dissenters" as they called the Congregationalists. Ebenezer perhaps thought that it was easier to get a ministry this way. However, Ebenezer's family had originally left England to become Americans. Ebenezer is starting to think differently. He is turning back to British ideas, in religion, at least.

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Ebenezer had to travel to England to be ordained, in 1748. This journey was necessary, as there were no bishops in America at this point. It was a dangerous, and expensive, journey, but he was sponsored by his future parish, Stamford. They had already had problems getting a minister:

This has made us very desirous to obtain a minister in orders among us.... We, therefore, exerted ourselves to the utmost of our abilities to assist Mr. Miner to go for orders, who was taken by the French on his passage; with the Rev. Mr. Lamson, [who] afterwards died in England, which proved a very melancholy disappointment to us; and before, we had contributed considerably to assist Mr. Isaac Brown, when he went home for orders, with hopes that he might have been sent to us, but were disappointed by his coming back for Brook Haven.

Stamford sound rather aggrieved by all these failed attempts to get their minister!

Luckily Ebenezer not only survived the journey, but on his return, he was loyal to Stamford, and stayed with them until he died.

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His parish got into financial problems over sponsoring Ebenezer to travel to be ordained. In 1759, a plea to the Connecticut Assembly:

*Your memorialists, being desirous to enjoy the worship of God according to the liturgy and discipline of the Church of England, to which we conscientiously thought it our duty to conform, did, several years ago, undertake to build a church for divine worship, and engaged our present worthy incumbent [Ebenezer] then not in orders, to read prayers to us, and afterwards sent him home to England, for orders, who accordingly went, and soon returned in orders to us, we having laid ourselves under obligations to pay him a considerable sum annually, towards his support, and for his expenses in going home, all which undertaking laid us under a considerable burden, which, however, we cheerfully endorsed, but soon finding we were unable to advance monies requisite to carrying on these designs, we ventured to borrow a considerable sum of money, in New York, for the purposes aforesaid, which, together with some benefactions procured for that end, we laid out in building our church, hoping we should be able, in a few years, to repay the same. ... Our church must still remain unfinished, and we are scarcely able to support our incumbent [Ebenezer], who has a numerous family: Wherefore, we humbly take the liberty to request the favor of your Honors to grant us liberty to set up and draw a small lottery, of about £2,000, lawful money, subject to a deduction of fifteen per cent. ... We are strongly encouraged and almost assured, if we obtain this favor of your Honors, that we shall be able to sell the most of the tickets in New York, Boston and Philadelphia, and consequently bring money into the colony, rather than carry any out; and we conceive there is no danger of its being a prejudice to the public, or to any particular person.*

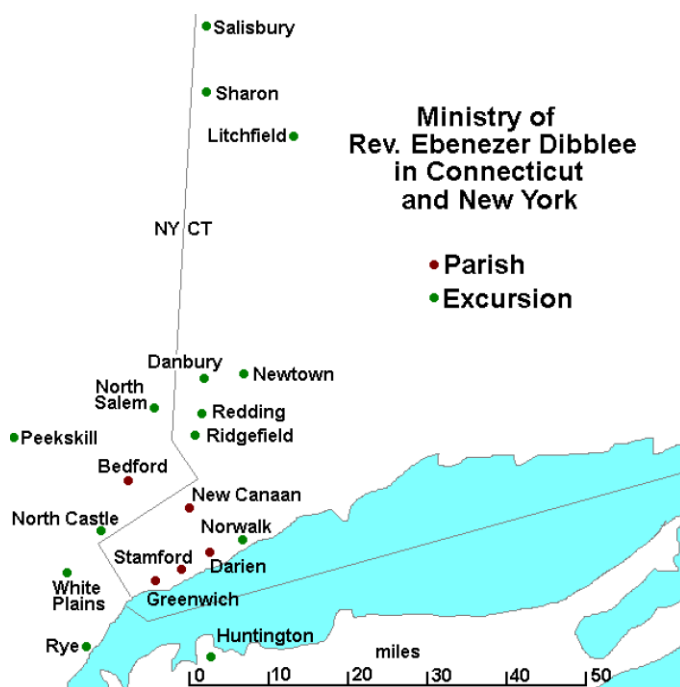
They never got their lottery!

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Rev. Ebenezer Dibblee had also been appointed as a missionary of the 'Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts'. This was not to convert people to Christianity, it was to convert them to the Episcopalian church. While based in Stamford, he covered a far wider area. An account says:

His immediate charge included Greenwich, Bedford, New Canaan, Darien, and Stamford. He was a genuine missionary, however, and made excursions to Rye, White Plains, Peekskill, Northcastle, Salem, Ridgefield, Danbury, Norwalk, Redding, Newtown, Huntington, and as far north as Litchfield, Sharon, and Salisbury.

These towns are marked on the following map.



Ebenezer married Joanna Bates in 1736, and had three sons, Ebenezer, Fyler and Frederick, and four daughters, Joannah, Mary, Sarah and Jane. Fyler was named after his grandmother, Wakefield's wife. The household included a black slave, I am ashamed to say.

So that might have been the story of Rev. Ebenezer Dibblee, a hard-working cleric. However, there were dramatic times coming.

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The American colonists were becoming increasingly frustrated at being ruled from Britain. The American War of Independence (or the American Revolutionary War) started in 1775. The Declaration of Independence was made in 1776.

Ebenezer had made his choice of career as a Church Of England minister. This made him solidly on the side of the British. A letter of his says:

*We view with the deepest anxiety, affliction and concern, the great dangers we are in by reason of our unhappy divisions, and the amazing height to which the unfortunate dispute between Great Britain and these remote provinces hath arisen, the baneful influence it hath upon the interest of true religion, and the well-being of the church. Our duty as ministers is now attended with peculiar difficulty — faithfully to discharge the duties of our office, and yet carefully to avoid taking part in these political disputes, as I trust my brethren in this colony have done, as much as possible, notwithstanding any representation to our prejudice, to the contrary.*

So Ebenezer was careful not to get involved in the politics. His sons were less restrained.

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Fyler Dibblee was the most energetic. From the History of Stamford (see bibliography).

In 1774 Captain [Fyler] Dibble and Mr. Jarvis of Stamford also enrolled themselves among those loyal still to the king..

In 1775 It having been represented to this assembly that Isaac Qaintard of Stamford, in the County of Fairfield, Capt. of the 2nd military company, in the town of Stamford, in the 9th regt. in this colony, and Fyler Dibble of said Stamford, Capt. of the first military company of Stamford, in said regiment, at said Stamford, in January last, in contempt of the authority in this colony, did attempt and endeavor to prevent the introduction of certain barrels of gun powder into this colony for the government's use..

During the war, Fyler went over to Long Island and entered the service of the British. Here he was captured with other loyalists in 1778, and his property in Stamford confiscated. In 1783 he was a deputy agent in transporting loyalists from New York to Nova Scotia, in April of this year he went with his wife, five children and two servants to St. John's, New Brunswick.

Fyler's story does not have a happy ending. He remained in New Brunswick, but was in debt, and finally he committed suicide.

Frederick, another son, was also a loyalist (to the British). He will be covered in the next chapter.

The other son, also called Ebenezer, fought on the side of the Americans.

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Their father Ebenezer stayed in Stamford. The Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College (see bibliography) says that:

*In the opening of the Revolution [Ebenezer] was of course in sympathy with the British side; but there is no tradition that he suffered any indignities from the opposing party. The esteem in which he was generally held probably served to protect him. When the result became clear, he accepted the new government loyally, and was faithful to it.*

His own letters hint otherwise:

*In 1789: I cannot see how Episcopacy & Republicanism can well coalesce.*

Part of his stipend had come from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. This stopped when the United States became independent, and Ebenezer seemed to become very short of money. There seems to be a suggestion that he moved north to join his Loyalist sons, but in several letters he explains why he cannot.

*1788: Can no method be devised for my relief, in consequence of my declining, in the winter of life, and cold climate of adversity, to remove to Nova Scotia. Necessity not choice prevents. Heaven forbids it, by my great age & Mrs. Dibble's, now in her 80th year; and in the want of health in the family, the effects of my persevering in that line of duty allotted me during the late Rebellion ; out of Loyalty to my Sovereign, and to confirm & preserve his Subjects, and members of my Church in dutiful Obedience to Church and State; at the hazard of all that is dear in life.*

*1789: I am chained down here, to suffer the inflictions of an angry God. Your letter found my family in the greatest adversity. My Daughter Polly, who had never fully recovered the steadiness and tranquillity of her mind, since by the terrour of our Sovereign Lords the Mob in the beginning of our late troubles, she was thrown into a state of insanity; hath a third*

*time, gradually relapsed into it; for 3 months past I have been confined to close attention to her, scarcely can go out but to attend public duty.*

*1790: The Church slowly & gradually rises out of its ruinous State, but incapable of affording me & dependents an adequate support, & in character, and in this evening of life, & cold climate of adversity to think of removing, it is impossible — Heaven forbids it — I must have my distressed family — The Church under my care will crumble to pieces — No — I hope still, & will cast my burden upon the Lord.*

His loyalty seems to be to his church and his family, rather than to his new country (“*our Sovereign Lords the Mob*”!)

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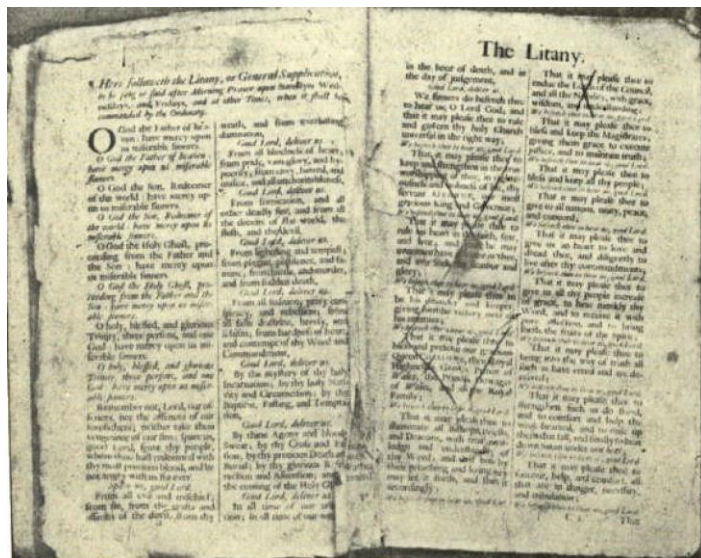
In one letter of 1789, there is rather a broad hint:

I envy not Mr. Moore, Beach, good Mr. Leaming, their deserved honors. The honour which comes from God, my highest ambition is to obtain.

Perhaps the hint worked. In 1793, the degree of D.D. was conferred on Rev Ebenezer Dibblee by Columbia College.

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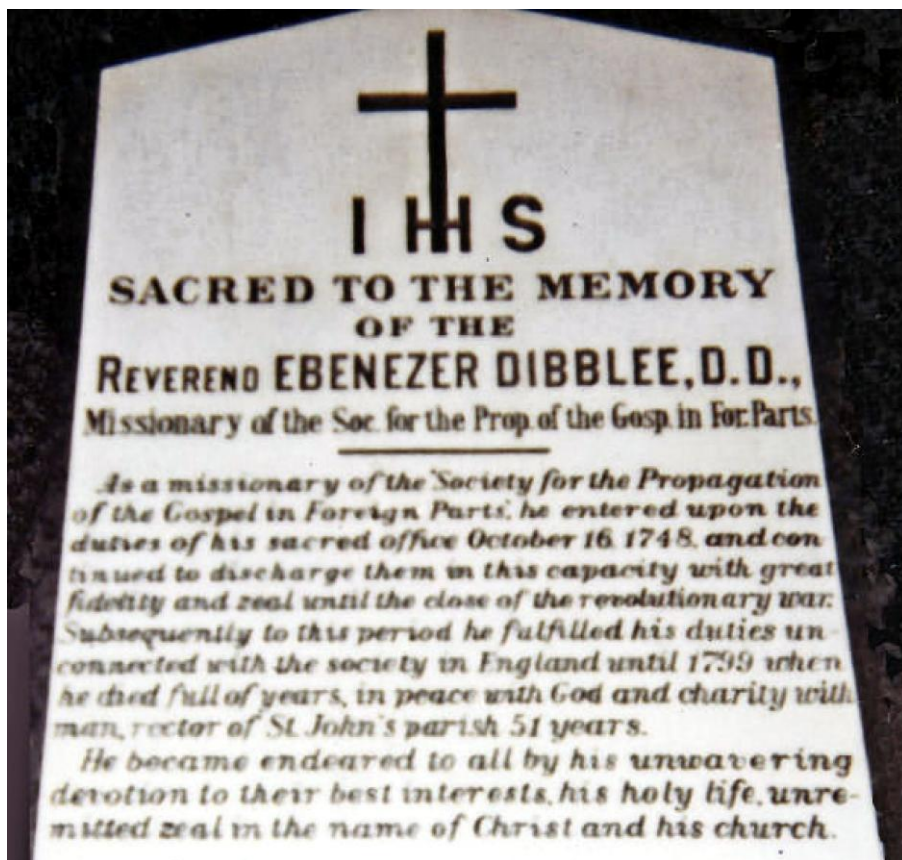
Ebenezer was also greatly concerned about the changes to the services of the new Episcopalian church. The old services had to be changed, since prayers for the health of King George III were not very popular in the new Republic. Here is a Episcopalian prayer book showing prayers for the King crossed out.



A new prayer book was adopted in 1789, but Ebenezer continued to use the English Book for three more years. Bishop Seabury, the new bishop in America, wrote a letter to persuade Ebenezer. In 1792, the Parish passed a vote to adopt the new liturgy of the Church, as agreed upon by the Bishop and clergy of this State, *provided that it is agreeable to Rev. Mr. Dibblee!*

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In 1799, Rev. Ebenezer Dibblee died, a few years after his wife. He is the last Dibblee in this book to live and die in the United States of America. He was 84, and had been minister of his church in Stamford for 51 years. His parishioners put up a memorial in his church.



It may seem odd to describe Ebenezer as a pioneer. He was a Tory, defending the old ways, the British and the monarchy, against the fervours of the new republic of the United States of America. However, he did build new Episcopalian churches in Connecticut, and he worked hard to support this form of religion. He stayed to look after his church after the War of Independence. This may have been because he was too old to move, yet he seems to have carried on fighting for what he believed in.

The future is often a mixture of the new and the old. Someone who fights to make sure that the old is not trampled underfoot still plays his part. Whether we agree with him or not, he still had the same determination as his Pilgrim forefathers.

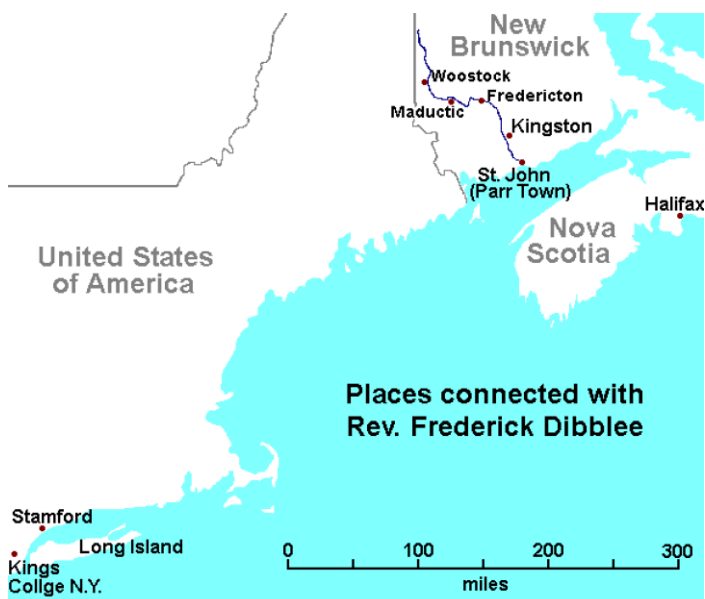
Frederick the Loyalist

of Woodstock, New Brunswick, 1753-1826

Frederick Dibblee was born in Stamford, Connecticut. According to the Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online (see bibliography):

At the age of 18 Frederick entered King's College, New York. According to his father, he was "honor'd with a Degree" in May 1776, but the college records indicate that he left without graduating. On his return to Stamford he found it enveloped in the revolutionary struggle.

Frederick supported the British, like his father. Perhaps he was more vocal than his father. Along with other loyalists, he was first moved out of Stamford to Lebanon, in eastern Connecticut. When he was allowed home, his life was threatened, so he fled to Long Island, to join his brother Fyler. There he married Nancy Beach. He entered into business, but his business was attacked several times by the rebels. So in 1784, he decided to move north to Nova Scotia.



Fyler had already moved there, but had proved unsuccessful, and eventually committed suicide (see last chapter). Frederick seems to have made a better job of settling in a new country. He got land at Parrtown (St. John). In 1785 he moved to Kingston, New Brunswick, where, like his father Ebenezer, he became lay reader to the Anglican congregation. Finally in 1787, he was appointed to establish a school for the Indians of the upper St. John river, above Fredericton. This involved another move.

Originally, Frederick planned to move to Meductic (now Nackawic) to start the school, but there is a family tradition that he was travelling there in a canoe, with an Indian, and he fell asleep. The Indian carried on paddling, and when Frederick awoke, he was at Woodstick, some way north of Meductic. He thought that the land was better there, and changed his land grant accordingly.

He and his family moved to Woodstock, New Brunswick in 1788, and stayed there for the rest of his life. As W. O. Raymond said (see bibliography):

Like all the first settlers' houses it was a rude log dwelling with rough hewn floor, stone chimney and huge fire place, the chinks and joinings of the walls well caulked with moss and clay, the roof covered with spruce bark or with split cedar, the furniture of the plainest and most primitive description, largely home made but with here and there some article of greater pretensions brought with the family from New England.

Frederick's diary describes making a new house in Woodstock, including the chimney and floors, and moving in late 1811. This new house was one of the first frame houses in Woodstock.

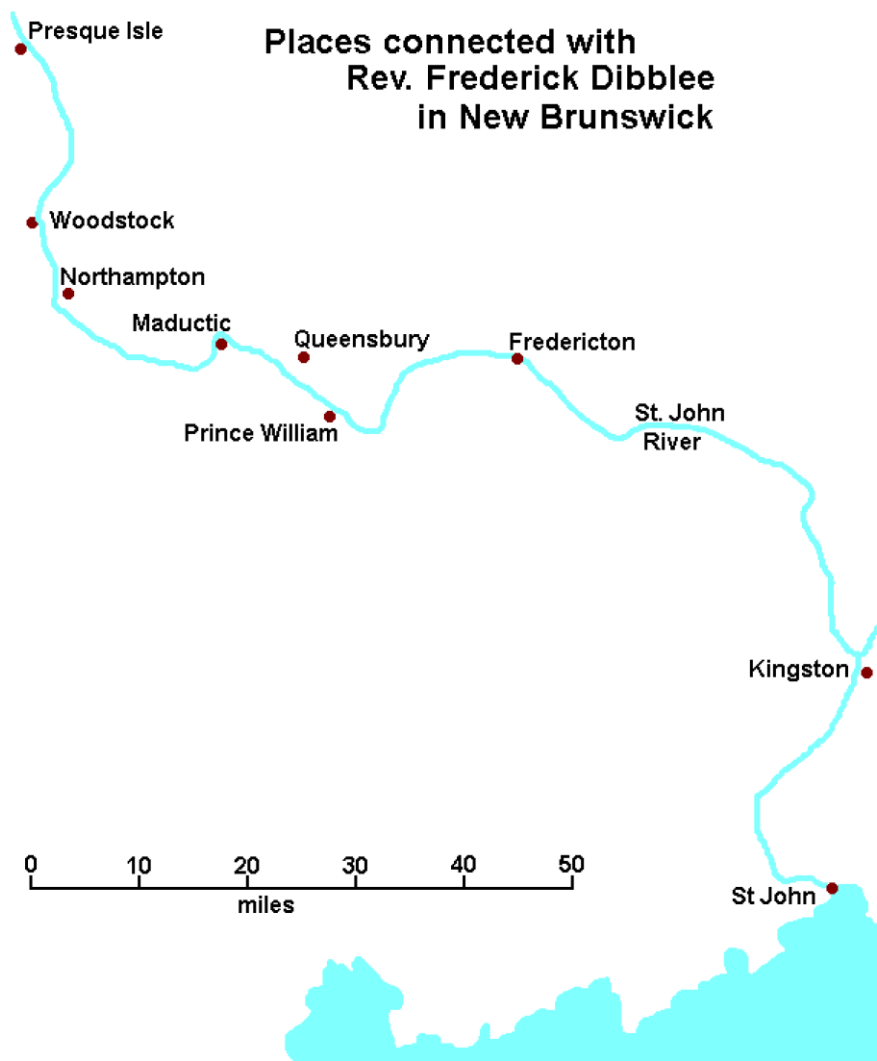
He spent some time setting up the new Indian school. The Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online says:

This school was one of a number established... whose aim was to convert the Indians from Roman Catholicism and to teach them both the English language and a trade. By 1790 he had 22 students, adults as well as children. "They are Constant in their Attendance," he wrote, "and exceeding quick in receiving Instruction, five of them in Particular are amazing so, having made great Improvement both in Spelling and Writing." By 1792 he had made some progress in the Indians' language, though reportedly hindered by "a necessary attention to his Farm, in order to subsist his family." Two years later, however, the school was closed, to centralise Indian education elsewhere.

He seems to have had a respect for the Indians, and tried to learn their language.

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Frederick was ordained Deacon in 1791. He had to travel to Halifax in Nova Scotia for this as that was where the bishop was. In 1792, he was ordained rector in Holy Trinity Church, St John, a shorter journey. He was given the parishes of Prince William, Queensbury, Northampton, and Woodstock. He also visited the military settlements north of Woodstock, including Presque Isle.



Frederick kept a diary. Parts of this are known from various sources. All that I can find are on my website at  
[gwydir.demon.co.uk/jo/genealogy/earlydib/frederickdiary.htm](http://gwydir.demon.co.uk/jo/genealogy/earlydib/frederickdiary.htm)

Here are some extracts:

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There are frequent mentions of his children: John (Jack), William, Maria, Elizabeth (Betsy), Frederick, George, Henry and David. The boys help their father with the farmwork:

1809 *May 17: William began to harrow for wheat.*

May 18: Richard harrowing. Jack ploughing.

May 19: Boys harrowing. William mending fence by the barn.

The children helped their neighbours as well:

1805 *Nov 7: Jack and William helping Uphams raise their house.*

The younger children were encouraged to take on responsibilities:

1805 *Mar 27: Betsy [aged 9] now has 4 ewe lambs.*

1810 *June 15: George [aged 10] planted his beans.*

Later, the older boys acquired their own land. The younger boys helped them as well:

1816 *Apr 13: Jack & George gone to drive Cattle out to his Stack of Hay on his place. Maria with the Slay [sleigh] to Fetch them Home.*

Sometimes things go wrong:

1804 May 19: *Put fire to my clearing which ran surprisingly and burnt up some of my fence.*

1809 May 23: *William went to mill with 4½ Bushels of Wheat and 1½ of Corn, and overset his Canoe and lost the Whole of it.*

1816 Apr 9: *William gave Mr. Rogers a Bushel of Wheat for Damage the Oxen did him last Harvest.*

Frederick carefully describes what he is growing or raising or catching:

1804 May 12: *Sowed flax & peas; planted ½ bushel of early potatoes.*

May 18: Caught fine mess of trout. Planted carrots, beets and parsnips.

May 21: First goose hatched eight goslings.

May 22: Took off the first turkey with 13 young ones.

May 23: Planted bushel of beets. Sowed sage seed, pepper grass and saffron seed.

May 24: Sowed bushel of belled wheat. Richard harrowed it in. Caught the first salmon.

May 25: Jack plowing for corn. Planted pole and bush beans. No salmon. Boys planted water mellons. Mended canoe.

1823 May 1: *Set out my Bountiful Spouts, Scotch Cale, and Brockalaw.*

May 8: Making Hot Beds and Fixing old Asparagus bed.

A hot bed was made with compost material. As it rotted, it gave off heat, which kept crops warm as they grew. The Dibblee family seem to have had a good range of food to eat!

One activity seems very important, and is described year after year, maple syrup production. Here is one year's description:

1816 Mar 30: *Ketchum went to Mrs. Davidson's to bring Potash kettle.*

Apr 2: Preparing for sugar.

Apr 3: Making spiles. Boys making troughs.

Apr 4: At the spiles. Boys at the Camp.

Apr 5: Sap runs well but we have not tapped any trees. Making troughs and fixing camp. At the spiles.

Apr 8: Began to tap our trees. Frederick and George at the Camp. Jack and Ketchum fixed Potash Kettle.

Apr 9: All hands at the Camp. Tapping as fast as possible. Boys caught 2½ Barrels of sap.

Apr 15: Jack & Ketchum & Frederick tapping trees as fast as Possible - George boiling down Sap.

Apr 16: William, Frederick & George at the Camp. Jack & Ketchum making troughs.

Apr 17: The boys caught 6 barrels [of sap].

Apr 18: Ketchum & the boys sugaring off for the first time.

Apr 19: The boys sugared off 100 lbs. of good sugar yesterday.

Apr 20: The boys caught 10 barrels yesterday. Last night uncommon Northern Lights.

Apr 30: George boiling down the last Sap.

May 1: Frederick and George sugared off better than 80 lbs.

May 4: George and Harry gone to gather the sap for honey and beer.

May 6: Sugared off this Day 47 lbs of good sugar - the last - having made this bad season 635 lbs. of good sugar.

May 8: Frederick and George gathered Sap and made two barrels of beer. Brought all from Camp.

The maple sap only ran at this time of year. It was tapped from the trees, then boiled down to make 'sugar'. The 'Potash Kettle' (an open cauldron) was used for this. It was borrowed from a neighbour! The 'honey' was maple syrup. Beer is made with barley or wheat, but sugar gives the alcohol a boost, and maple sugar would give a good flavour as well. There are plenty of maple beer recipes on the web.

Frederick was a loyalist, who left the United States because of antagonism towards him. Yet he talks casually of people travelling to or from the States:

1809 *Dec 29: Sally Ketchum, Maria, William & George Bull with Jack gone for a visit to the States.*

Dec 31: The Boys and Girls came from the States.

1811 *Nov 23: This day Mr. Bull had a nephew came from the States to visit his Relations here.*

1816 *Oct 21: Jack this Day Set out on his visit to the Unighted States.*

Since there were no hotels in Woodstock, many people stayed with the Dibblees.

1808 *May 29: Col. Jarvis at my place on his way to Canada with Major Thompson.*

1811 *Feb 20: On this day Judge Hubbard and Mr. Allan arrived and stayed with us Two Nights and a Day.*

Feb 23: Major McCarty, Captains Hunter and Moody, Lieuts. Joblin, Rainsford and Shore arrived and breakfasted with us.

You may be confused that someone is travelling north from Woodstock, New Brunswick, to Canada. At this time, New Brunswick was a separate British colony.

There were parties:

1816 *Mar 5: Jacob Allan with his sister Mary came on a visit: the 6th Nicholas Cunliffe's Great Ball - Two of the Miss Simpson's with their Brother Dined with us and then all hands to the Ball. The next night at a Ball at Mr. William Upham's.*

Mar 8: Edward Street, his Sister and Miss Hannah Hubbard arrived - Spent the evening at Mrs. Griffith's. The 9th all our friends dined with us and then went for the evening to Capt. Ketchum's. Boys and girls all completely tyred with dancing.

1817 *Jan 3: Maria at Capt. Ketchum's - a Party of Young Fry at Capt. Cunliffe's.*

1818 *Jan 1: George Bull gave a most Extensive New Year's Ball to all the Young Ladies and Gentlemen.*

Jan 2: Celebrated the Season. Capt. and Mrs. Bull, Capt'n & Mrs. Ketchum, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, Sister Dibblee, Mrs. Bedell, Mrs. S. Bull, Charles & Betsy, Dined with us. Mr. and Mrs. Beardsley, Mrs. William Dibblee drank Tea with us.

1820 *July 19: Afternoon Charles Ketchum had a Mowing Frolick - the First that has begun Haying.*

Frederick may have been a Church of England pastor, yet he seems to enjoy these 'Frolicks' and 'Balls' and 'drinking Tea', and happily notes the *Boys and girls all completely tyred with dancing!*

Weather could have a dramatic effect:

1804 *Nov 11: At night Mr. Beardsley arrived St. John, having left my canoe two miles below Fredericton. where the snow fell 3 feet and filled the river so thick that no canoe could stir no more than if it was solid ice. We fodder now as in winter.*

Nov 15: Several families crossed the river in their sleighs to church.

1807 *May 4: The river rose during the night four feet at least, and carried away almost all my rails. Mr. Putnam has had his place stripped of all the fence. The water is about six feet over the top of my bank, and all the high intervalles are under water. We never had such a freshet.*

1811 Jan 16: *I left home with William and Maria for Kingston and found the slaying [sleighting] Remarkable Good, it being Ice the greater part of the way.*

1813 Mar 1: *No church on account of the storm; never, never, was there such a season. Drifts in some places ten feet above the fences. Lately a succession of storms; people five days getting to Woodstock from Fredericton; roads shovelled only to drift again.*

1816 May 29: *Mr. Smith sheared my sheep - 27. Never was there so Cold [cold] a day at this time of year - With my Great Coat buttoned up I could scarce keep myself warm in sowing - sowed 2½ bushels of wheat in New Ground.*

June 7: The Snow fell last night. Never knew of snow in the summer before.

June 10: Hills on the other side of the river entirely covered with snow; never was there such a June.

June 11: A very heavy frost, the ground all white. At 10 a. m. it grows warm and we lay aside our great coats which we have worn eleven days!

1816 was known as the “year without a summer”. In 1815, there was a massive eruption of Mount Tambora in the Dutch East Indies, which created a volcanic winter. These diary entries show the effect on the other side of the globe.

1825 July 28: *Clear and warm day and night last tea days.*

Sep 17: From last date continued warm and dry weather, never the like before in this country. Crops all in but corn and potatoes without any rain.

Oct 15: From last date the same remarkable dry weather. Fires run both in the woods and on the improvements in a surprising and destructive manner. In Fredericton near an hundred houses, stores and barns burned. On the Oromocto several houses and children burned and numbers suffered in other parts of the province. We never knew such a time before.

The earth is so dry that fire burns a considerable depth, and nothing but a great rain can stop it, which God grant.

Nov 17: It is ascertained that above 200 have perished by fire and in the river at Miramichi. All furniture, clothes, provisions and every kind of stock, houses, stores and barns at Newcastle and a number of other settlements entirely destroyed - Terrible indeed!

~~~~~

Frederick, known by this time as Parson Dibblee, died in 1826 aged 72. His will said:

*Rev. Frederic Dibblee: Parish of Woodstock, York County. Will dated 16 May 1825, proved 22 June 1826. Wife, un-named, her maintenance. Property divided among sons John, William S. I., Henry C. and daughter Maria Jane Dibblee. Daughter Elizabeth Dibblee £5. Sons Richard, Frederic B., George J. and David Lewis Dibblee each £25. Son David Lewis support until he leaves school. Sons John Dibblee and William S. I. Dibblee executors. Witnesses: Nancy W. Rice, Charles Peabody, Charles Raymond.*

This seems at first to treat his children unfairly, since John, William, Henry and Maria get land, and Richard, Frederick, George and David get £25. Elizabeth only gets £5. However, there is sound reasoning behind this.

John, William and Henry had decided to become farmers. They already had land of their own, so they get their father's land. The other sons presumably had decided on professional careers. For example, George was a barrister (see next chapter). Presumably their father did not have much cash, but divided what he had among the sons who were not interested in land.

The difference between the daughters can also be explained. Elizabeth was married by this time, and her father gave her a dowry of land then. Maria was not married, and this bequest of land was a possible future dowry for her. In fact she never did marry, but the land gave her an income.

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Rev. Frederick Dibblee was certainly a pioneer. He was among the first to settle in Woodstock, and his diary gives details of clearing land and making a living from it. He also seems to have had good relationships with the local Indians. He was responsible for setting up new Anglican churches in his parish.

Frederick had a profession, as a minister, and, for a short time, teacher. But he was also a farmer and his diary showed how interested he was in working his land. Some of his sons did the same, but from now on, the Dibblees that we are following leave the land completely.

George the Barrister

of Fredericton, New Brunswick, 1800-1877

George is usually called George J., or George Jarvis. He was probably named after George III, King of Britain. His father, Frederick, was after all a loyalist. Frederick said in his diary:

1820 Mar 23: *An Express from St. Andrews brought the Intelligence of the Death of our Good Old King.*

George's middle name, Jarvis, is the surname of his aunt, Polly Jarvis, before she married Fyler Dibblee, Frederick's brother. Fyler sadly committed suicide through depression, but Frederick's family kept in touch with his wife. 'Sister Dibblee' is mentioned in Frederick's diary.

~~~~~

George was born in Woodstock and spent his childhood on his father Frederick's farm. Frederick's diary refers to him helping out on the farm (see previous chapter). The first reference in the diary is a bit startling:

**1809 20 Nov:** *George and Henry went over to Mrs. Woodward's in my Birch Canoe.*

**24 Dec:** *George and Henry came home by way of the Island. The Ice very Strong.*

George was around 9 years old at this time, and Henry only 7! It seems risky, letting two young boys travel by canoe, by themselves, especially in winter. They seem to have survived the experience, though.

~~~~~

George's father Frederick had an interest in education. He describes a school house and its teacher in his diary:

1815 Dec 4: *This day Mr. Kendal began the School at 10/- Pr. Schollar at Mr. Bedell's who has hired a room for 10/- a month. Afternoon Capt'n Bull & Jack fixing School Room.*

1817 Dec 23: *This is the last day of Mr. Kendall's keeping school, he having left us for Clerk to Mr. Thomas Philip's and the School in that Neighborhood.*

1818 Jan 5: *George began the school in Room of Kendall, who has left us.*

George was 18 years old at the time. George J. Dibblee is listed under Petitions for Teachers' Licences & Payment for Carleton County for 1818 and 1821, so he did seem to have considered a career as a teacher. However, at some point he changed his mind and decided to become a lawyer.

~~~~~

The first reference to this is a newspaper report of his marriage. On 22 Dec 1825, the New Brunswick Royal Gazette records the marriage of George J. Dibblee, Esq. to Elizabeth Ketchum, second daughter of Major Ketchum. George is described as a Barrister at Law. They were married at Woodstock by George's father. This must have been just before Frederick died. The Ketchums were good friends with the Dibblees, often mentioned in Frederick's diary. Sadly, Elizabeth died on 22 June 1827, possibly in childbirth. This was in Fredericton, so George and Elizabeth must have moved there for his legal career.

George remarried fairly quickly, to Susannah Mary Wetmore. She was the fifth daughter of Thomas Wetmore, formerly Attorney General, which may have helped George in his legal career. They had nine children:

Emma, Mary, Sophia, Elizabeth, Frederick, Thomas, Kathleen, Grace and Sarah. Susannah died in 31 August 1848.

Two years later, George married yet again, on 12 Nov 1850, to Jane Peters, daughter of Hon. Charles J. Peters, yet another former Attorney General! The 1851 census describes the whole family as living in Fredericton, with four servants.

~~~~~

When Robert and Thomas originally sailed to America in the 1630's, the records merely described their wives as Goody, Sister, or just Wife, so we do not even know their names. Later we do know wives' names and possibly where they came from, but little else. But there is a letter written by Jane Dibblee, wife of George, which shows her personality.

This is really part of the story of George's son, another Frederick, who will be covered in the next chapter. But I want to show this letter here. Young Frederick was in London. His fiancée, Emily Binney, lived in Moncton, in New Brunswick. Frederick had just been given a job as a railway engineer in India, and wrote to Emily asking her to sail to England to marry him, so they could go onto India together. Both his parents wrote to him, but since Emily had to leave in such a hurry, she took the letter with her, rather than it going by the normal post.

Dear Fred

This we hope will be handed to you by Emily, you will then naturally be too happy to appreciate letters from your dear old home and other dear ones. When you can be a little more reasonable you will be glad to know how happy the good news of your success has made us and the satisfaction we feel that Emily will go to share with you the good and bad of this changeable life.

We are all so fond of her, have had such a good opportunity in her long stay with us this summer (so much better chance than when you were

monopolising her society) of finding out all her valuable qualities Your Father was charmed with her. She would be his able assistant on all occasions and he thinks will be able to take the best of care of you. It quite reconciles us to the great distance we are to be separated.

I hope her family thinks as well of it as we do, it will be hard to part from her at any time her services to them are so valuable. If she had not got away in this hurry in hopes to reach you in England, I doubt if they would have consented to her going as far as India.

The time is very short, but if you get word she is coming you will have the Blacksmith ready at the nearest point if not her friends in England will take good care of her and send her to you. Poor thing, she has borne the delay and your many absences with the greatest fortitude and resignation and in this hour of tribulation is ready to endure all and follow you. I hope it will be in your power to make her as happy as she deserves.

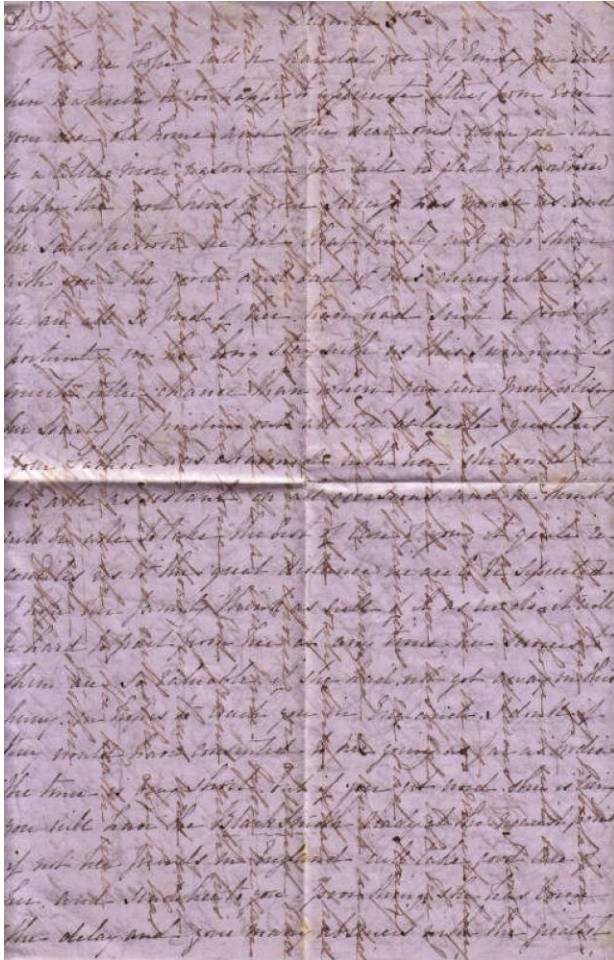
I wrote her a long letter but as usual with me, in too much hurry to make it as correct as I could have wished. Tell her I hope she overlooked all the deficiencies. We had scarcely time for anything but I hope we managed so what we did forward reached her safely. I could only send what I had in the house. There was no time or choice or I would have done something better.

It will be some time before we can hear from you in your new home. God grant with his help it may be a happy one. Follow his laws and trust in him, and you will be satisfied with the Lot he has chosen for you. With every good wish for the health and happiness of you both.

Your affectionate Mother

Jane Dibblee

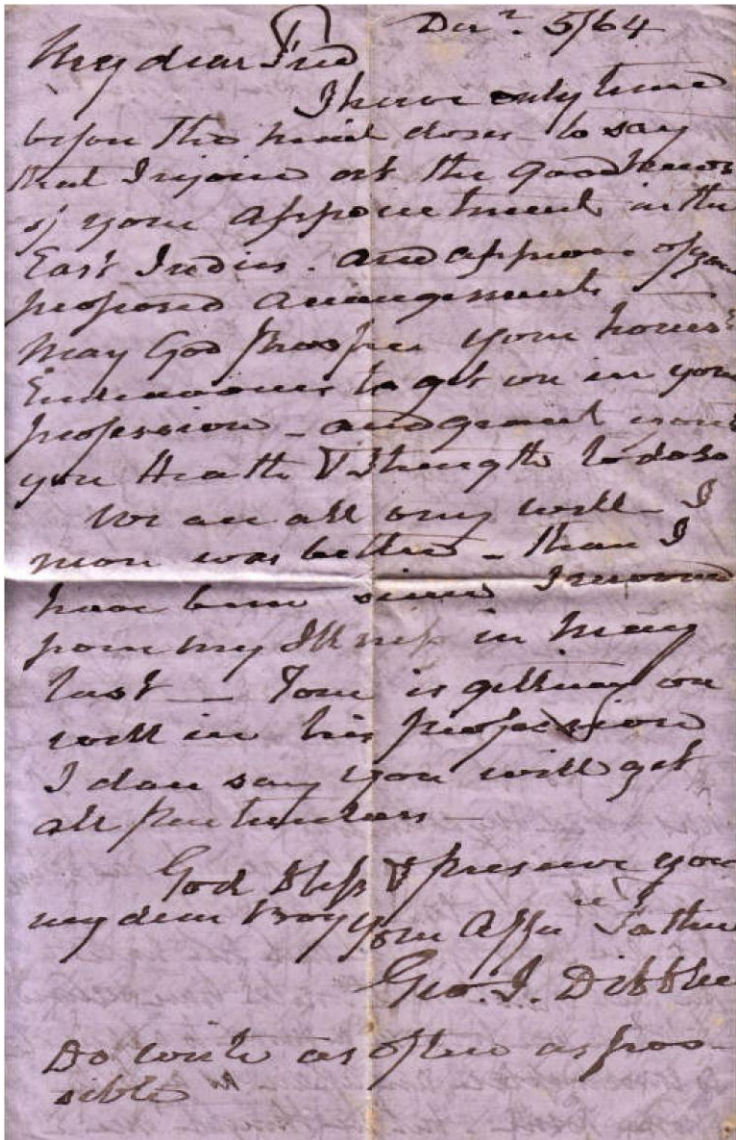
Here is the original letter. I do not think that you will be able to read it! It is 'crossed' to save paper, meaning that it is written one way, then turned, and written over the top another way.



The first time I read this letter, I thought that it was a wonderful letter. Jane tells her son that she thinks his new wife is charming. She tells him to "make her as happy as she deserves". It shows that she was a kind and generous mother.

But it is even better than this. Jane is actually Frederick's step-mother. She obviously made an excellent job of looking after her husband's children as if they were her own.

I mentioned that both parents wrote. Here is George's letter, followed by the transcription:



My dear Fred Decr. 5/64
 I have only time
 before this must close to say
 that I rejoice at the goodness
 of your appointment in the
 East Indies. and approve of your
 proposed arrangements.
 May God prosper your honest
 endeavours to get on in your
 profession - and grant you
 you Health & Strength to do so
 We are all very well - I
 never was better - than I
 have been since I moved
 from my old nest in May
 last - Tom is getting on
 well in his profession
 I dare say you will get
 all particulars -
 God bless & preserve you
 my dear & your Affec^d Father
 Geo. J. Dibble
 Do write as often as pos-
 sible

My Dear Fred,

I have only time before the mail closes to say that I rejoice at the good news of your appointment in the East Indies and approve of your proposed arrangement. May God prosper your house & endeavours to get on in your profession - and grant you health and strength to do so.

We are all very well – I never was better than I have been since I recovered from my illness in May last - Tom is getting on well in his profession. I dare say you will get all particulars.

God bless and preserve you very dear boy

*Your affn. Father
Geo J. Dibblee*

Do write as often as possible

No mention of the wedding (unless that is the "*proposed arrangement*"!) Blaming the "*mail closing*" for the short letter. Men, eh? But there are genuine, if rather gruff, good wishes, and I feel that George was fond of his son Frederick.

Incidentally, Tom is George's younger son. He became a lawyer, like his father.

~~~~~

That describes George's family life, but how about his legal career? There are a few examples of his legal work. The first is a petition of George J. Dibblee, available on the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (see bibliography):

*... the petition of George J. Dibblee and others freeholders of the County of York praying an Inquiry into the Qualification of John Allen Esquire a member for the said County, to hold his seat, and also praying that the same might be invalid and also that the Sheriffs return might be altered by inserting the name of George F. Street Esq. as the next candidate at the late Election for the said County duly qualified and that the Said George F. Street Esquire might be allowed to take his seat*

This is an attempt to overthrow the result of an election. The reason is not given. It was decided:

*That the said John Allen Esquire elected to serve in General Assembly as a member for the said County of York, was duly qualified so to be elected, and further That the said petitions do not appear to the said Committee to be frivolous or vexatious.*

So the petition failed, but at least it was not considered to be "*frivolous or vexatious*"!

~~~~~

The next is really part of the story of George's son Frederick, again. It is a passport made out for Frederick to travel to Brazil. This is a hand-written document with an interesting feature.

The document says that Frederick Dibblee is a British subject, living in Fredericton in 1837, and it is signed by the mayor of Fredericton with the official seal. It also has an extra piece by a lawyer, stating that this is the mayor of Fredericton, and it is his handwriting, and this is the proper seal.

So the mayor is authenticating Frederick Dibblee, and the lawyer is authenticating the mayor.

The thing is ... the lawyer is George Dibblee, Frederick's father!

~~~~~

The final piece of legal work is George's own will. It is long and full of legal language, unlike the others wills we have seen so far, so here is a summary.

The will makes Jane Dibblee (his wife), David Lewis Dibblee (his brother), and Frederick L. Dibblee and Thomas W. Dibblee (his sons) executors and trustees of his estate. This should be used "*for the support and maintenance of such of my daughters as shall remain single and unmarried after my decease.*" If all the daughters marry or die, then the estate is to be shared among his wife, their children, and their heirs.

There is then a codicil, added after Frederick Dibblee has gone to India and his other son, Thomas, has died. They cannot be executors anymore, so a daughter is appointed instead. The trust acts in a similar way. But, when describing what will happen after all daughters die or are married, the will says :

*In the case of the marriage of all my daughters, and after the decease of my wife Jane Dibblee I desire the residue of my Estate to be divided among my daughters and their heirs, share and share alike, in which I direct my late son Thomas W.'s two children to be included.*

There are a couple of points that strike me about this will. First the codicil has disinherited Frederick Dibblee and his children. I do not know if George meant to do this.

Secondly, it seems to discourage the daughters from marrying. There is no facility allowed for a dowry (although I suppose that the trustees could come to an arrangement), and marriage will deprive a daughter of her "maintenance". Compare that to George's father's will, where the unmarried daughter is bequeathed land outright, rather than making her dependent on a trust.

In fact, some of the daughters never did marry, and they lived a long time. The trust must have been quite a burden to administer, and possibly a problem to wind up, finding all those heirs.

~~~~~

In conclusion, can we call George a pioneer? Surely not. His only move is from his childhood home to a few miles downriver to the nearest city. His chosen career is a lawyer. A respectable profession in an established city, how mundane! And yet...

George Dibblee was loosely connected to a couple of lawyers in Fredricton who took part in a strange story: George Ludlow Wetmore and George Frederick Street. The Wentmores were members of the loyalist élite among Fredricton lawyers, while the Streets were outsiders. As the Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online says (see bibliography):

Relations between the two families were not cordial. During a trial in 1821 the two sons carried their argument outside the courtroom and Wetmore challenged Street to a duel. On the morning of 2 Oct. 1821 Street shot and killed his opponent. Wetmore's friends persuaded the sheriff to issue a warrant for Street's arrest for murder. He had fled to the United States following the duel, but he returned to stand trial in Fredericton in February 1822 and was acquitted.

This scandal had repercussions:

This triggered a whole series of measures to safeguard the gentlemanly image of the bar. In 1823 the Supreme Court imposed on the profession the first extensive regulations for the admission of students-at-law, attorneys, and barristers.

After all, you cannot have lawyers slaughtering each other on a whim!

George's petition (see above) was trying to benefit George F. Street. Also George was in a law partnership with George Berton, the nephew of George Frederick Street. George Berton was involved in making the Fredericton lawyers more professional. So George seems to have been on the Street's "side". Yet his second wife was the daughter of Thomas Wentmore, the father of the other duellist. Thomas Wentmore was a loyalist, as was George's father, of course. So George's actual sympathies are not obvious.

However, one thing is certain. The "professionalisation" of the legal business involved tightening up the qualification of lawyers. Yet George had no formal qualification. His younger brother, David Lewis Dibblee, studied at the College of New Brunswick, getting a B.A. then Attorney-at-Law, then Barrister-at-Law. George did not even study for a degree. He presumably learned his trade "on the job".

So George predates the crack-down. He belonged to the swash-buckling age of duelling lawyers! That is an exaggeration, perhaps. But there are different stages of civilisation, and George was there at a time of great change.

Frederick the Railway Engineer

of India, 1837-1888

Frederick was born in Fredericton. We saw in the last chapter that his father George has perhaps a dubious claim to be a pioneer, but Frederick has a far better claim, using the definition “*an original worker in a particular field*”. He decided to become a railway engineer.

In 1853, Frederick attended a course of instruction in Civil Engineering at Kings College (later University of New Brunswick). It was given by Mr. T. McMahon Cregan, an engineer working on the European and North American Railroad.

Frederick was 17 years old at the time. Railways were the exciting new technology of the time. The Stockton and Darlington Railway had been opened in 1825 in England, the world's first publicly subscribed passenger railway. During the following decades, railways were being built all over the world. As early as 1835, there was talk of a St. Andrews and Quebec Railway. Part of this railway was planned to go through Woodstock, although it did not reach it until later, as a branch line in 1868. Still, young Frederick must have heard from his extended family still living in Woodstock all about these plans.

Whether this was the reason for his interest, or whether the lecture course inspired him, Frederick had decided on his future career. He was going to build railways. This was a technology which transforming society, and he was to be part of it.

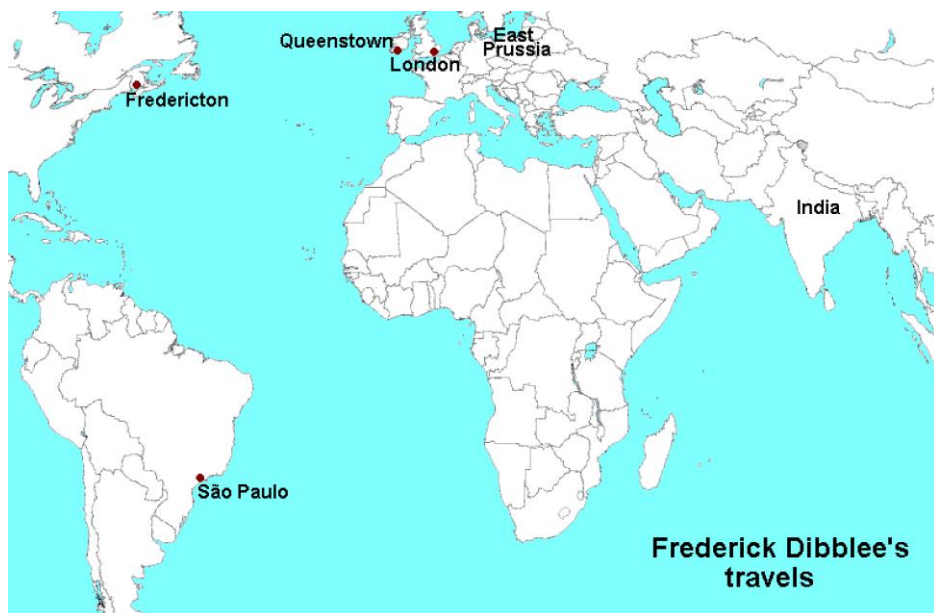
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Frederick started his apprenticeship under Mr. Alexander Luders Light in 1856, working on railways in New Brunswick. Later he followed Light to work in Brazil in 1863. He had a splendid passport to go to Brazil (see last chapter, where his father, George Dibblee, signs the passport!)

Then Frederick went to England, at the same time as Light. Frederick found a new employer, Sir George Bruce (an apprentice of Robert Stephenson), and was given a short job on the East Prussian Railway in 1864. His career so far is described in Frederick's obituary by Institution of Civil Engineers:

*Frederick Lewis Dibblee began his apprenticeship to the profession of Civil Engineering in 1856 as a pupil under Mr. Alexander Luders Light, at that time Chief Engineer of the European and North American Railway in New Brunswick. Mr. Dibblee first assisted in completing the surveys, and afterwards, until 1861, had charge of a 10-mile section comprising heavy works. He was next engaged for two years, by the same engineer, on the explorations for the Intercolonial Railway. Mr. Dibblee's service of seven and a half years on railway work in an undeveloped country was of the greatest assistance to him, by fostering qualities of self-reliance and confidence in his own abilities, which afterwards became characteristic.*

*The surveys of the Intercolonial line having been interrupted, Mr. Dibblee was employed by Mr. (now Sir) James Brunlees, Past President Inst. C.E., for nearly a year on the construction of the São Paulo Railway in Brazil, and he afterwards had experience under Mr. (now Sir) George Bruce, Past President Inst. C.E., of continental methods, as Engineer-in-Charge, for eight months, of a division of the East Prussian Railway under construction.*



So far, all this work was short-term, and Frederick had not established himself in serious employment. That was about to change. But first, we have to backtrack and look at his personal life for a bit.

It is perhaps strange that the most romantic story in this book is not about idealistic immigrants making a living in a new land, or fired by religious missionary work. This story is about a railway engineer and the love of his life. Which was not railways, but a lady called Emily Binney.

Emily lived in Moncton, New Brunswick. She came from an important family in Halifax, Nova Scotia. An ancestor was a member of the first General Assembly of Nova Scotia in 1758. A cousin was the fourth bishop of Nova Scotia. Emily's father, Stephen Binney, was the first mayor of Halifax. However, he seems to have become bankrupt, and moved to Moncton to start again, where he had some success.

Stephen Binney had an interest in the new railways, which presumably explains how Frederick became acquainted with the family, and Frederick

and Emily fell in love. But Emily's family felt that they were superior to the Dibbles, and that Frederick could not support Emily as his wife.

Emily was very sensible about this. There is a family record from her children where she described this time. She told Frederick that he had to progress in his career (which might involve work over-seas) so they could get married. As for herself, she would wait, faithfully, for five years. If Frederick was not successful by then, she would look elsewhere for a husband.

So Frederick did just that. He had to leave Canada for his work over-seas, in Brazil and Prussia. Then finally he got his break, while in London. He was offered a well-paid job as engineer working on railways in India. This meant that he had to leave almost immediately for India. So he wrote to Emily saying "Well, how about it? Will you leave everything, your family, your country? Will you marry me, and go out with me to India?" Emily did not hesitate. Of course she said Yes!

We have already seen, in the last chapter, the letter that Frederick's mother, Jane Dibblee, wrote to him about this. Jane hinted that there was still trouble with the Binneys:

*I hope her family thinks as well of it as we do, it will be hard to part from her at any time her services to them are so valuable. If she had not got away in this hurry in hopes to reach you in England, I doubt if they would have consented to her going as far as India.*

Jane also talked about the "*Blacksmith*", as a reference to Frederick and Emily's marriage. Run-away marriages could be celebrated at Gretna Green, in Scotland, and the local blacksmith would do the honours. This is a joke, of course, as Frederick and Emily actually had a conventional wedding in London. But it does hint, perhaps, that Emily did have to break away from her own home, so it had an air of an elopement.

All this is romantic enough as it stands. But the actual details of this meeting are equally stirring. Frederick was very pressed for time as he had to go out to India quickly. So Emily had to come right away. There is a telegram by her father, Stephen Binney, announcing her arrival.

MONCTON NB. NOV. TWENTY NINTH.

FREDERICK L. DIBBLE.

SEVENTY FIVE JERMYN ST. ST. JAMES. LONDON

ENG. MAIL NY.

EMILY LEAVES HALIFAX STEAMER EIGHTH DECEMBER.

MEET HER AT QUEENSTOWN.

STEPHEN BINNEY.

Transcription:

*Moncton NB. Nov. Twenty Ninth.*

*Frederick L. Dibble.*

*Seventy five Jermyn St. St. James. London*

*Eng. Mail NY*

*Emily leaves Halifax Steamer Eighth December.*

*Meet her at Queenstown.*

*Stephen Binney.*

This does show that her father had consented to the wedding, however grudgingly. But there are a couple of other interesting points about this telegram - for one thing, its date. This was sent on November 29th 1864. But there was no telegram service across the Atlantic in 1864. There had been earlier, in 1858, but that only lasted a month before the wires broke.

The next successful attempt was not until 1866. So how can this be a telegram?

The clue is in the telegram itself: Eng. mail N.Y. This message was sent as a normal telegram from Moncton, New Brunswick, to New York. It was then put on the English mail ship to sail to England. This meant that it was not a telegram as we would think of it. It was really an ordinary letter, with perhaps a few days shaved off the journey. Remember, this was a time before email, before telephones. This was how they communicated with each other, and over long distances, it took weeks, not seconds, even in an emergency.

The implications are jaw-dropping. Emily's father sent a telegram to Frederick saying "Please meet Emily in Queenstown" which is Ireland (now called Cobh). This was the port for trans Atlantic liners. But the timing meant that Frederick would not have time to reply, to say "Yes", or even worse, "No, I can't meet her then!" Emily crossed the Atlantic, by herself as far as we can see, presumably never having travelled far before, to meet her intended husband, in a strange land, with no guarantee that he would even be there! Jane Dibblee's letter said the same:

*The time is very short, but if you get word she is coming you will have the Blacksmith ready at the nearest point if not her friends in England will take good care of her and send her to you.*

Emily must have been a very brave lady.

And, yes, they did meet up successfully, and they did marry, and she went with him to India, and it is obvious that it was a very happy, life-long marriage. Ahhhh!!

~~~~~

This was an important moment. Frederick (and Emily) never went back to New Brunswick. This is the point where this line of the Dibblee family left the North American continent. Of course, Frederick had left it several years earlier, when he went to Brazil. However, he might not have been aware of the permanence of that departure.

Frederick was busy working in India. If he had some spare time, he spent it in England. Canada was just too far. I wonder though if Emily felt some resentment towards her family? Her mother did suggested a visit on occasion, but Emily never went back.

~~~~~

Frederick Dibblee came to India in 1864. This was a time of great change. The parts of India under British control had been run by the East India Company, with their own private army. In 1857, the Indian Mutiny broke out. One of its consequences was that the British Government took over control of India. There was a massive increase in the railway network after this time. This incidentally benefitted the whole of India, but an important reason is likely to be the ability to move troops around if necessary.

So there was a lot of work for Frederick to do. He worked on railways throughout India, all his life. His obituary by Institution of Civil Engineers (see above) continues to describe his career.

*Mr. Dibblee was next sent by Mr. Bruce to Madras, in a similar capacity [Engineer-in-Charge], on the Great Southern of India Railway in November 1864. In India he found his proper sphere, and the remainder of his career was passed in that country, in active and continuous employment, mostly on railway work. After being District Engineer on the Great Southern of India for a year and a half, he became Chief Engineer, a position he continued to hold until August 1868, when he retired, and became Chief Engineer of the Carnatic Railway, also in the Madras Presidency.*

*In 1873 Mr. Dibblee came to England for a well-earned holiday, but less than a year later, on the 24th of March, 1874, he entered the Public Works Department of India, as Executive Engineer, Ghotki Division, Indus Valley State Railway. Among other work, he was engaged on the then Punjab Northern, the Southern Mahratta, the Cuddapah, Nellore, and Orissa Railway surveys; and in Burma on the Tounghoo-Mandalay Railway.*

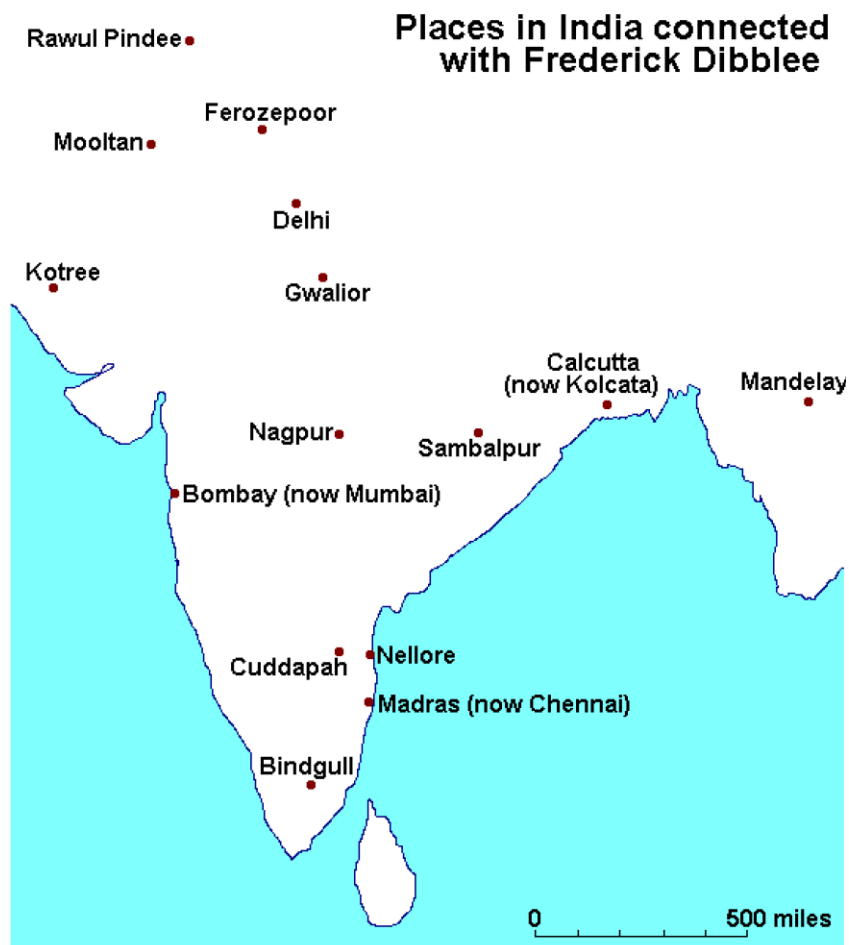
*He died at Calcutta on the 28th of September, 1888, having just been posted to join Mr. Horace Bell's staff for the Desert Railway survey in Rajpootana.*

*Mr. Dibblee acquired a reputation in the Punjab for his bold and skilful construction of temporary timber stagings, made from railway sleepers, for the erection of iron bridges. These stagings were devised so that the progress of the work should not be interrupted by freshets or floods in the nullah-bed, as was the case with ordinary stagings. He was elected an Associate of the Institution on the 6th of December, 1864, and was transferred to Member on the 23rd of February, 1869.*

The obituary also includes the official record of Mr. Dibblee's service under the Indian Government including where he worked. My website about Frederick Dibblee gives full details of this, and other information about Frederick:

[gwydir.demon.co.uk/jo/genealogy/dibblee](http://gwydir.demon.co.uk/jo/genealogy/dibblee)





Modern names in India can be different from the names that the British used (and those were not always consistent).

~~~~~

Now to return to Frederick's family. He and Emily had eight children, many born in India. Sadly, three children died of cholera, all in the same year, 1871. India was a unhealthy place, and there was obviously some debate over whether it would be safer for the surviving children to live in England. Emily's family wrote to her about this. Her brother, Irwin Binney, wrote in 1874:

My dear Sister ... I fell very much disappointed to hear you intend to go back to India so soon. I do not think it would be right to take the children to India again. I think the climate is not at all suited for young people, but you and your husband know best what to do with your own children.

Emily's mother (also called Emily) wrote at the same time:

Dearest Emmie it was such a relief to find you writing in such good spirits, and dear little Binney so much better, and you have really heard you are to go back to India again, I hope it will be a long time dear Emmie before it is all settled, what you tell me about dear Binney made me shed tears – his asking you to stay until he was 8 years old – and his love for you – the darling – was so touching – how you are going to bear it all poor Child I do not know.

The surviving children were George Binney (mentioned in the letter), Jane Emily, Frederick Lewis, Bessie Maud and Tom Arnold. Frederick, Bessie and Tom were born in India after the infant deaths, showing that at least part of the family was still in India then. I suspect that (George) Binney had to stay in England to go to school. Eventually all the children were settled back in England, with their mother for some of the time and occasional visits by their father.

The following photo was taken in London in 1881, and shows the whole family.



There is evidence that Emily did spend some time with Frederick in India, presumably leaving her children in England. This rather frivolous article was published in 'The Indian Engineer' April 18th 1888, a few months before Frederick Dibblee died, about an amusing incident that happened while he was working on the Bengal-Nagpur Railway Survey in 1881. It is written in mock-Biblical language. My comments are in [].

Extract from the unofficial Progress Report

And it came to pass about this time that as he journeyed he came to a place which is called Katgora, nigh unto the city of Bilaspur, which is chiefest of

the cities which are in the provinces that are in the midst of the land; he and his wife and his men-servants and his maid-servants, and his cattle, among which were many of the tribe of Behemoths, that great beast, for the carrying of his tents and of his goods. [A Behemoth is a large beast mentioned in the Book of Job, later often identified as a hippopotamus. This seems unlikely! It could be a water-buffalo, or possibly even an elephant. Both were used as pack animals.]

Certain young men were also with him that were called 'the boys' who had come from the hill called Cooper's. [Cooper's Hill was the Royal Indian College of Civil Engineering, in Surrey, England.] There were also with him six fighting men of valour of the army of the country, men of a dark complexion withal, and a centurion was in command of the fighting men. [These soldiers would be from a native regiment, with their officer. The 'centurion' was their officer. He figures later in the story as brave, alert and sensible.]

And it came to pass that, as he was sitting by the door of his tent, about the going down of the sun, and his wife and the young men, even the boys, behold there stood before him the centurion that commanded the six fighting men that were with him, and made obeisance unto him. Now this centurion was a mighty man and a valiant hunter; for it was known unto all men, that when at one time, a wild beast, even a bear had passed nigh unto the tents, he had gone for that wild beast, a staff only being in his hand, and had put him to flight.

So his master harkened unto the words of the centurion, and he opened his mouth and said 'Let not my lord be angry, but hear what thy servant speaketh'. And he answered and said unto him 'Say on'. And he said: The women of this city have besought me saying, The wild beasts that are in this land do increase and multiply mightily, and do eat of our corn and the fruit of our trees, and do climb up into our high trees, even our Mohur trees, and do eat the fruit thereof, and the same fruit is an exceeding pleasant fruit, sweet even as the sweetness of honey unto the lips, but

stinking in the nostrils of him that doeth eat thereof. From this fruit cometh also a wine even a strong wine that maketh glad our hearts.' [This is a bit of a puzzle. There is a tree known as the Mohur tree, the Royal Poinciana or Flame Tree, with bright red flowers. However, no-one mentions the fruit (or the smell!) This description sounds like a Durian, which is notorious for its sweet fruit and vile smell. Durian trees are cultivated in India. It ferments easily.]

'Wherefore we pray thee, speak unto my lord that he may make ready his sword and his mighty spear, and his other weapon wherefrom there cometh that great and terrible voice [a gun]. And thus it will come to pass that he will smite the old beasts and we will live and not die, we and our little ones. Wherefore, my lord, be thou ready, and when the wild beasts draw near at night unto the Mohur trees, thy servant will make bold to tell thee of this thing.' Then his master arose and cried with a loud voice unto the centurion. 'Thou hast well said and it shall be even as thou hast spoken'.

Then he called unto him a servant and commanded him saying: 'Bring me, I pray thee of the wine that is pressed in the island that is in the west, from the com that is called barley' [whisky] and he brought it. Then he and the young men that were with him, even the boys, drank of the wine of the barley, mixed with water, and they refreshed their souls withal.

But his wife that was in the tent, hearing the words of the centurion, rejoiced greatly in her heart, and leapt for joy and smote her hands together and said within herself 'When my husband is sleeping with an exceeding heavy sleep, as his manner is, then will I arise and make ready his sword and his spear and his weapon with the great and terrible voice that smiteth from afar, farther than the arrow of the bowmen that are in this land. I will make ready also his shoes for his feet and his coat of strange and divers colours that he weareth in the morning. [I wonder if this means his slippers and dressing gown?] Then I will awake my lord

and put his weapon into his hand, and he will arise and smite the wild beasts that eat of the fruit of the land and his soul will rejoice.

Now the woman was not at all afraid, for so it was aforetime that very early in the morning as they were journeying before it was yet day, she was alone, for the others were with the tents that were bound upon the back of Behemoth, half a day's journey behind her. And she had gone on before them to prepare a place where they should pitch their tents, and behold there came out and met her upon the way a mighty bear of a black and terrible countenance, and her visage did not change at all, neither was she afraid but pursued that wild beast even into the wilderness; [wow!] and now she said within herself, 'Peradventure he shall come again.

And it came to pass that when they had drunk of the wine and of the water that the man-servant had brought unto them, her lord and the young men that were with him arose up and departed, every man unto his own tent, for it was night. But the centurion slept not.

And lo, in the darkness of the night the centurion came softly unto the door of his lord's tent and in a still small voice spake and said: 'Master, Master, Baloo, Baloo!' [We know from The Jungle Book that this means a bear. However the Jungle Book stories were first published in magazines in 1893 and this story was published earlier, in 1888. The story does not bother to translate Baloo as Bear. The British in India were familiar with the local languages.]

Then his wife, hearing the words of the centurion, arose in haste and woke her lord. And he awoke and got him to his feet and walked even as one in a sleep walketh when he dreameth for his eyes were heavy. Then she gaveth him his weapon into his hand, and he took it unwittingly and in great haste. Then she led him to the door of the tent and put his feet into his shoes and his coat of divers colours upon his back.

And she opened the door of the tent and behold in the darkness of the night three great she-bears out of the wood had come nigh unto the tents and were eating of the fruit of the mohur trees that had fallen on to the ground, and there was a sound even as the sound of feeding and a breathing through the nostrils withal. Then she, being behind him even at the door of the tent, pointed the weapon that was in the hands of her husband and cried with a soft voice and said 'Smite them! Smite them!' Then he, being heavy with sleep and holding the weapon unwittingly, drew at a venture and shot one of the beasts.

But seeing that the other two wild beasts departed not thence, neither feared the voice of the weapon that was in the hands of her lord, the woman marvelled greatly and cried again unto her husband 'Smite! Smitel.' And he, being by this time awakened out of his sleep, smote yet another wild beast from afar, even from the door of the tent. But the third beast that was with them that were smitten went thence not at all, nor fled away but remained. So she cried again unto her husband, 'It is well my lord, but smite again I pray thee, lest peradventure this wild beast that still liveth be that same great bear with a black and terrible countenance that met me sometime upon the way and that I pursued into the wilderness.'

Then he smote again a third time, even as his wife commanded him and lo! there arose a great and bitter cry from the beast that had been smitten, for it was not yet slain. And he said within himself: 'Behold, it is a dream and I am not awakened out of my sleep, for verily aforetime I heard not the cry of a bear like unto this bear'. And he arose and went out quickly and looked upon the carcasses of the beasts that had been slain and lo! they were red and black and their tails were long and not after the manner of bears, which have short tails. And he covered his face for he was ashamed.

And it came to pass that the centurion had followed him to see the thing that was done, and the six fighting men and all the men servants and Dyal Chaunder, the scribe and the six young men that were with him, even the

boys. And they brought torches, for it was night. And when they came unto the carcasses of the beasts that had been slain, they looked into one another's faces and were silent for the space of one hour. But the lord, being ashamed, beheld no man's face but turned and went into his tent. For they were kine [cows].

And soon there arose a great sound of laughter from the tent of the young men, even the boys. But from the tent of the hunter that had slain the kine was heard the voice of only one that laughed and the laughter was even as the laughter of a woman and not of a man. And she smote her hands together, but her lord laughed not at all, for he was ashamed.

And from the tent of Dyal Chaunder the scribe and from the tent under which slept the centurion was heard no laughter at all, for they said within themselves: 'Our master hath slain three kine that are holy kine and sacred, now therefore our faces are blackened before the people of this land.' And they wept sore.

And it came to pass that they all rose up very early in the morning before it was day and got them from thence with haste, lest peradventure the people of the city should revile them. And they came into the city of Bilaspore, where in those days there resided a publican, who was also a man of war, but whose name was even the name of a Pharisee, and not of a publican [unknown].

But Dyal Ghaunder the scribe tarried behind with the kine that had been slain, for the wife of his lord had besought him, saying 'Suffer not I pray thee, the report of the thing that hath been done to follow us into the city of the publican who is also a man of war.' And she gave him certain pieces of silver wherewithal to appease the wrath of those that possessed the kine. And he came unto her at evening and said. 'For ten pieces of silver, current money with the merchant, have I appeased the wrath of them that possessed the kine;' and she said 'Thou hast done well.'

And they departed thence and journeyed many days and came into a city which is called The City of a Thousand Gardens [Hazaribagh, a city about 100 miles south of Patna - hazar is Urdu for 'thousand', and bagh means 'garden'.] and they dwelt there. And they wot not that it was known what manner of thing had been done.

But the noise thereof spread abroad throughout the land, so they tarried there for the space of but two months, and being ashamed by reason of the laughter of the young men, even the boys, and of the long man who has writ this [it seems that Frederick did not write this article himself], whose laughter was turned into weeping until he was like to die, he that had slain the kine, and his wife and his manservants and his maidservants departed thence and went into a far country and there abide even unto the present day.

And the other works of this mighty hunter and his name (F.L.Dibblee Ex. Eng.) and all that he did, and the highway that he found for the King, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the Public Works Department? [The government record of his career]

Of course, it was bad to kill cows, which are venerated by Hindus. But Frederick seems to have been properly ashamed. This is a frivolous story, full of in-jokes and attitudes of the time. It does show something of the character of Emily. She travelled with him while he was working, including camping, choosing campsites, and apparently even chasing off a bear!

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Frederick Dibblee died in 1888 from a fever, while still working in India. Sadly, Emily was not with him, as she was in England with the children. There were several obituaries, such as one given above from the Institution of Civil Engineers, which covers his career.

This is a more personal obituary.

THE LATE MR. F. L. DIBBLEE, M. INST. C.E.—A correspondent writes:—It is with much regret that I allude to the sudden death of Mr. F. L. Dibblee, at the Bengal Club, on the 28th of September. He was well known in Madras and the Punjab, where he had for many years filled high positions in various Railways. After practicing abroad, in Brazil and elsewhere, he came out to India as Chief Engineer for a Railway Company in Madras. He afterwards joined the P. W. Department; and was for some years on the Indus Valley Railway; then as Engineer-in-Chief, Delhi-Ferozepore Railway Survey, the Western Deccan Railway Survey and the Cuddapah-Nellore State Railway near Madras. He was an Engineer of ability and high professional attainments, and an able writer—though, no doubt, at times, his pen flowed too fluently for his own good. Those who knew him well, found, under a somewhat cynical manner, a kind and generous mind, and a clever and entertaining companion. He was on his way to join the Delhi-Kotri Survey, having come from the Toungoo-Mandalay Railway, in which climate he, without doubt, contracted the fever which led to his death here. Civil Engineers are certainly given many opportunities of encountering dangers and difficulties in distant tracts without the hope of reward or honor. The result is often only a man less, one widow more, a few fatherless children, and no pension to pay.

This sounds as if it was written by someone who knew him.

The points that strike me are:

*He was an Engineer of ability and high professional attainments, and an able writer - though no doubt, at times, his pen flowed too fluently for his own good. Those who knew him well, found, under a somewhat cynical manner, a kind and generous mind, and a clever and entertaining companion.*

And

*Civil Engineers are certainly given many opportunities of encountering dangers and difficulties in distant tracts, without the hope of reward or honor. The result is often only a man less, one widow more, a few fatherless children, and no pension to pay.*

A sad end to the life of Frederick Dibblee, the pioneering railway engineer.

## Summary

This is really the logical end to the story. Frederick's wife and children remained in England, and their descendents were born there. It is hard to be a pioneer in England. It is an old country, with many people, and institutions in place for centuries.

So first, I will recap on the stories that we have met so far. There are two shapes to these stories. The first is a straight line. Every person (and let us admit, this means every man) has been born in one place. At some part in his life, rather than doing the same as his father, he moves somewhere else, and makes a new life.

Sometimes this new life involves helping to start a new town. Robert, Thomas and Frederick the Loyalist were the first, or nearly the first, inhabitants of their chosen towns. Wakefield was in the first generation or so. Sometimes the new life involved a job, and this was often pioneering in its way as well. Ebenezer the Parson helped to establish the Episcopalian church in Connecticut. Frederick the Railway Engineer built new railways. Ebenezer the Soldier followed an old trade, of course, but he was defending the new towns that the pioneers had created. George the lawyer followed an old trade as well, but he was there before it was cleaned up and became modern (and probably more boring!).

Interestingly enough, while all these people made a break with their own fathers' way of life, after the break they mostly settled down in one place to become respectable and staid themselves. Pioneering requires not just the courage to make the break, but the hard work afterwards, as well.

Why is this? Is there a genetic link between these people? No, I don't think so. Sons may be like their fathers, but following a character trait through several generations becomes increasingly faint and unlikely. Also, while 'our' Dibblees were different from their fathers, some of their brothers stayed at home and continued with the family farm.

Looking at these people, we can see a couple of points. They were part of large families. One man would make a comfortable living for himself, and perhaps accumulate a decent amount of land. But it would not go far if divided among all his children. Most of these people were younger sons. Their elder brothers often inherited the family land. They did not. So there was nothing to keep them in the same place, and they needed to go elsewhere to make their own way in life. In the young colonies, it was easy to travel to the frontier towns where young farmers were welcome, and could find land of their own.

Later on, getting new land became harder, and it was more sensible to move into a new job instead. Established jobs may be hard to get without connections, so it is not surprising that they were exploring new areas. It makes me wonder if the Middle Classes were actually started by younger sons...

Some of these men had other motives. Robert and perhaps Thomas, the original immigrants, left England in disgust at the religious intolerance in Stuart England, and the inability to govern their own lives. Ebenezer the Parson and his sons were also had religious, and political, convictions, and stood out against the norm during and after the American War of Independence. Ebenezer's sons even had to leave their country. Of course, the convictions of the two groups were opposed to each other. I wonder what a discussion between Robert the Bailiff and Ebenezer the Parson would be like. A free and frank exchange of views, one feels... But they were alike in many ways.

That is the straight line shape of these stories. But there is another shape, a circle. Robert left England as a non-conformist. His son Thomas was a firm member of the Congregationalist church. His son Ebenezer seems more half-hearted, requiring the Halfway Covenant to get his child baptised. We know little about his son Wakefield, but Wakefield's son, another Ebenezer, became a Church of England parson, in the very

religion that his great, great grandfather had rejected. Parson Ebenezer's son, Frederick declared for the British during the American War of Independence, and was forced to move north, to the British colony of New Brunswick. From that point on, the family seem to think of themselves as British, if living in Canada, and it was natural for Frederick's grandson, another Frederick, to go to England, and then to India, as part of his railway career. His children settled happily back in England. So from England back to England in eight generations, and two and a half centuries.

## And the rest...

There are only three people left in this line, and as I said, they do not really fall within this story, but I will say a little about them, to bring us up-to-date.

Frederick the railway engineer had five surviving children when he died. The middle son was also called Frederick, and he was my grandfather. He was born in 1872. Originally, they planned for young Frederick to join the army as an engineer. His father knew that the work would be better paid and more regular than he could get in a civilian job. But the training required funding by the family, and unfortunately, since his father died in India before this happened, the family was short of money and it was not possible. Young Frederick still entered the armed forces, but as a mari

Frederick the marine had a varied career. He was on the Benin Expedition in 1897, and was present at capture of Benin City. He was involved in naval intelligence in Malta around 1910. He was in the Battle of Jutland in 1914, on HMS Marlborough. His ship's certificate for HMS Marlborough says "*Major Diblee's knowledge of German has been very useful during the war.*" (You will notice the perennial inability to spell 'Dibblee' correctly!) He was wireless officer, and one German message that he had to interpret said that the Marlborough, the ship he was on, had just been sunk!

Frederick's career spanned from 1892 to 1919 when he had to retire due to chronic nerve deafness. His first ship, HMS Triumph, had sailing masts as well as a funnel (see following page).



**HMS Triumph**



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Frederick and his wife, Violet, had three children, David, Margaret and John. John, my father, was born in 1918 and died in 2012. He followed his father into the armed forces, but went into the Royal Artillery. He was commissioned in 1938, the year after his father died.

John was at the Dunkirk evacuation, 1940. He was involved in various training exercises after this. Then he was part of the disastrous Dieppe Raid in 1942. As Wikipedia says:

The assault began at 5:00 a.m. and by 10:50 a.m. the Allied commanders were forced to call a retreat. No major objectives of the raid were accomplished. A total of 3,623 of the 6,086 men (almost 60%) who made it ashore were either killed, wounded, or captured.

John was one of those that were captured.

John wrote several serious or witty accounts of his wartime experiences. They are given on my website, at:

gwydir.demon.co.uk/jo/genealogy/earlydib/john.htm

John was a prisoner of war for the rest of the war. He was liberated by American forces in 1944. He was found to have tuberculosis. He met my mother, Celia, in hospital, where she was working as a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) doing nursing work. They married in 1946.

John had to leave the army for medical reasons. One of his jobs was the opposite of pioneering. He worked for a firm which imported staves for beer barrels. There was a decline of what was once a major industry, as there was a shortage of decent oak, and aluminium casks were cheaper to make and clean. The firm folded in 1961. So he was one of the last, rather than being one of the first.

~~~~~

And then there is me. I am not going to say much about myself. My only claim to be a pioneer would be that I started as a computer programmer in 1971. That is early, but not really even first generation, although my school head teacher did ask me what computers actually did! I remember computers that needed a whole room to themselves (air conditioned) with less computing power than your mobile phone has. I remember in 1974, an academic proudly showing that he could contact an American ("immediately!") using his computer. He was using an early version of the internet. There were computer programs stored on punched cards, that warped if left on a window sill, and we talked of "shuffling the deck" if the cards were dropped.

And I watched, astonished, as the world changed. It seemed that at one point everyone said "Oh, how clever you must be to work with a computer!" and the next, everyone was saying "Stupid computer! It's just gone wrong."

I think I identify most with Frederick the railway engineer. He must have watched as his chosen career changed the world, and what was excitingly new became commonplace. But perhaps that is true of all the people in this book, and everywhere else as well.

Perhaps we are all pioneers...

## **Bibliography and web links**

The early documents are available online not in their original (presumably hand-written) form, but as transcribed by 19th century historians. They give the original spelling and punctuation. When I give quotes, I have kept most of this (I enjoy it!) but tidied things up a little where I felt that it was interfering with the comprehension too much. Anything inside [square brackets] has been added. I strongly advise that if you want a quote, you should not copy my version, but go to the originals below.

I found the following books using Internet Archive:

[archive.org/details/texts](http://archive.org/details/texts)

Winthrop's journal 1630-1649

Roger Clap's memoirs

Dorchester town records

Hotten's lists, with passenger list of a ship from Weymouth 1635

Records of the First Church at Dorchester in New England 1636-1734

List of freemen Massachusetts Bay Colony from 1630 to 1691

The history and genealogies of ancient Windsor, Connecticut by Henry R  
Stiles (contains Matthew Grant's Old Church Records as an appendix)

Early Connecticut probate records 1635-1700

Early Connecticut probate records 1700-1729

Biographical sketches of the graduates of Yale College

History of Stamford, Connecticut

Sketches of church life in colonial Connecticut

Proceedings at the centennial commemoration of the ordination  
of Rev. Frederick Dibblee

Passenger list of the Recovery - 1633: [www.winthropsociety.com](http://www.winthropsociety.com)

Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut 1636-1776: [lib.uconn.edu](http://lib.uconn.edu)

Case of Israel Dibble & Deborah Bartlett:

[cslib.cdmhost.com/cdm/ref/collection/p15019coll10/id/189](http://cslib.cdmhost.com/cdm/ref/collection/p15019coll10/id/189)

Address in Memory of the Rev. Ebenezer Dibblee, D.D:

[anglicanhistory.org/usa/misc/tatlock\\_dibblee1881.html](http://anglicanhistory.org/usa/misc/tatlock_dibblee1881.html)

Articles by W. O. Raymond in Woodstock 'Dispatch':

[archives.gnb.ca/Exhibits/FortHavoc/html/Raymond50.aspx](http://archives.gnb.ca/Exhibits/FortHavoc/html/Raymond50.aspx)

Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online:

[www.biographi.ca](http://www.biographi.ca)

Provincial Archives of New Brunswick:

[archives.gnb.ca/Search/FEDS](http://archives.gnb.ca/Search/FEDS)

I found most of the New Brunswick documents using this. It includes news reports, land grants, and much more.

Lectures on engineering at King's College, NB:

[power.eng.mcmaster.ca/findlay/eicweb/chapter5.pdf](http://power.eng.mcmaster.ca/findlay/eicweb/chapter5.pdf)

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[gwydir.demon.co.uk/jo](http://gwydir.demon.co.uk/jo)

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